Guitar & Bass MARCH 2012

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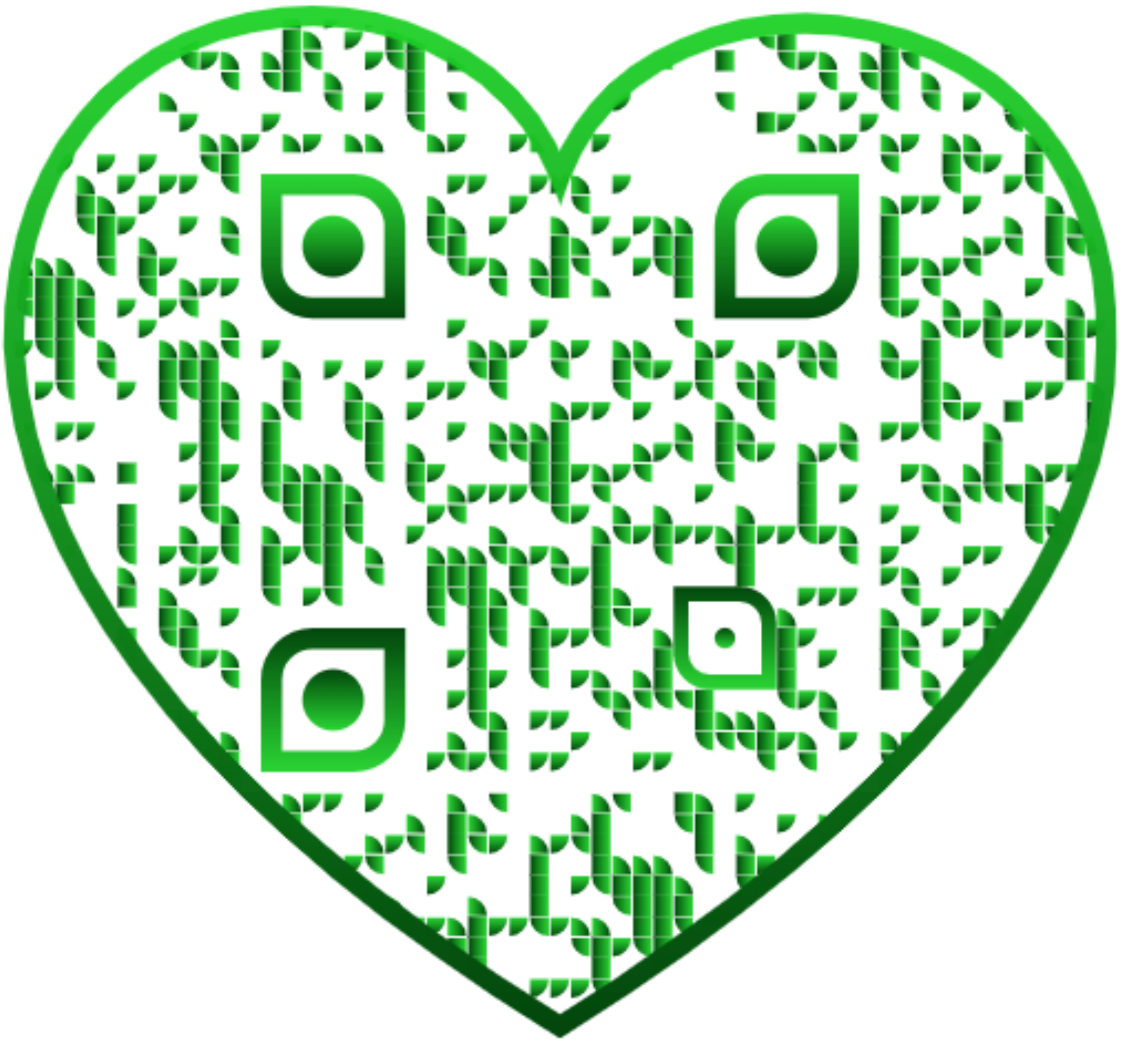

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Electric Guitars

7028 - Brian May, Antique Cherry
7027 - Brian May Metal May, Black
5720 - Charvel Star Electric Guitar in Ferrari Red
7872 - Cort Z42, Wine Red
7793 - DBZ Barchetta Eminent FR Absinthe
7792 - DBZ Barchetta Eminent FR+, Black Cherry
7785 - DBZ Barchetta ST, Aubergine
7786 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Black Metallic
7789 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Cobalt Blue
7787 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Metallic Red
7788 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Silverburst
7814 - DBZ Crucifixion Electric Guitar
7810 - DBZ Dark Angel Electric Guitar
7812 - DBZ Bare Bones Religion Series Devil
7811 - DBZ Bare Bones Religion Series Preacher
7826 - DBZ Bird of Prey, Dark Blue Metallic
7833 - DBZ Bird of Prey, Gunmetal Metallic
7832 - DBZ Bird of Prey, Silver
7835 - DBZ Bird of Prey, White
7798 - DBZ Bolero AB, Black
7800 - DBZ Bolero AB, Solid Wine Red
7799 - DBZ Bolero AB, White
7801 - DBZ Bolero AB Plus, Black Cherry
7796 - DBZ Bolero FM, Trans Wine
7795 - DBZ Bolero FM, Vintage Natural
7797 - DBZ Bolero QM, Siberian Quilt
7794 - DBZ Bolero ST, Black
7803 - DBZ Imperial FM Electric Guitar in Wine
7837 - DBZ Venom, Dark Blue Metallic
7838 - DBZ Venom, Silver
7836 - DBZ Venom GX Watchers
5043 - Duesenberg 49er Cow Limited Edition
5044 - Duesenberg 49er Skull Limited Edition
5042 - Duesenberg 49er Zebra Limited Edition
5046 - Duesenberg Imperial Semi, Light Orange
5041 - Duesenberg Rocket II in Black
5040 - Duesenberg Rocket II in Black & White
7294 - Epiphone 'Lennon' Casino Semi, Natural
5205 - Epiphone Broadway Jazz Semi, Natural
5605 - Epiphone Casino Semi, Natural
7047 - Epiphone Dot Semi, Natural
7046 - Epiphone Dot Semi, Vintage Sunburst
7053 - Epiphone Dot Semi-Hollowbody in Cherry
7937 - Epiphone ES175, Vintage Sunburst Finish
7051 - Epiphone G310, Red
5432 - Epiphone G310 SG In White, Cherry, Ebony
4750 - Epiphone G400 SG, Ebony
7049 - Epiphone G400 Vintage, Worn Cherry
5364 - Epiphone Les Paul Cust GX Dirty Fingers
7209 - Epiphone Les Paul Standard, Ebony
7207 - Epiphone Les Paul Studio, Worn Brown
7776 - Epiphone Les Paul Tribute 60+, Sunburst
7873 - Epiphone Les Paul Tribute +, Blk Cherry
5583 - Epiphone Les Paul Ultra II Hybrid
7017 - Epiphone Les Paul, Zakk Wylde Bullseye
7894 - Epiphone Ltd Ed Casino
7898 - Epiphone Nick Valensi Riviera P-94
7014 - Epiphone Pee Wee Zakk Pakk, Black/White
7048 - Epiphone Prophecy Les Paul Cust EX Ebony
7023 - Epiphone Riviera Ltd Ed P93 Cust Goldtop
4568 - Epiphone Vee Wee Zakk Pakk, Black/White
7181 - Epiphone Zakk Wylde Les Paul Custom Camo
7482 - Fender 62 Reissue Stratocaster, Green
4233 - Fender USA Deluxe Telecaster, Tungsten
4231 - Fender Am Special Strat, Candy Apple Red
4149 - Fender USA Special Strat, Black
7942 - Fender American Standard Strat, Sunburst
7941 - Fender Am Standard Strat, Olympic White
5291 - Fender Classic Player 50s Strat in Gold
5298 - Fender Classic Player Baja Tele Des Sand
4743 - Fender Classic Series 60s Strat, Blue
4562 - Fender Deluxe Lonestar Strat, Black
7112 - Fender Deluxe Lonestar Strat, Sunburst
7135 - Fender Highway One Strat HSS, Black
7075 - Fender Highway One Tele, Sunburst
7070 - Fender Highway One Tele, Sunburst
4634 - Fender Jim Root Signature Strat, Black
7955 - Fender LH Standard Strat, Arctic White
7945 - Fender Thinline Tele, Olympic White
7784 - Fender Mustang Pawn Shop Special, Red
5335 - Fender Road Worn 50's Tele in Sunburst
5287 - Fender Road Worn 50s Strat in Black
4229 - Fender Road Worn Player Strat, Sunburst
4232 - Fender Road Worn Player Tele, Black
7954 - Fender Standard Strat, Copper Met Burst
4326 - Fender Standard Telecaster, Arctic White
4560 - Fender Standard Telecaster, Black
4748 - Fender Standard Tele, Brown Sunburst
7946 - Fender USA Deluxe Tele, Cherry Sunburst
7230 - Gibson 68 Flying V, Classic White
7847 - Gibson Custom BB King Lucille, Ebony
5299 - Gibson CS336 Semi, Vintage Sunburst
7882 - Gibson Custom Shop ES339, Pelham Blue
7293 - Gibson ES175 Archtop Jazz Guitar Natural
7846 - Gibson Explorer in Classic White
5317 - Gibson Les Paul Custom in Alpine White
7901 - Gibson Les Paul Junior 1958 Satin Cherry
7063 - Gibson Les Paul Standard, Chicago Blue
6976 - Gibson Les Paul Std Trad, Desert Burst
7033 - Gibson Les Paul Std Trad Heritage Cherry
7054 - Gibson Les Paul Standard Trad, Wine Red
5313 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Worn Cherry
7904 - Gibson Les Paul Studio Faded
5090 - Gibson Les Paul Studio Lefty, Wine Red
7888 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Alpine White
7900 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Ebony
7926 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Fireburst
7851 - Gibson Les Paul Studio in Wine Red
7948 - Gibson Les Paul Supreme, Cherry Sunburst
5428 - Gibson Les Paul Traditional in Ebony
7231 - Gibson Les Paul Traditional Goldtop
5229 - Gibson Melody Maker in Ebony
7481 - Gibson SG Custom, Aged White

Electric Guitars

4752 - Gibson SG Raw Power in Satin Olive Green
5594 - Gibson SG Special Electric Guitar in White
5448 - Gibson SG Special Fade in Worn Brown
5152 - Gibson USA Les Paul Junior 58, Sat White
4603 - Gretsch G6136 Steve Stills White Falcon
6091 - Jackson Christian Olde Wolbers Sig Dinky
5722 - Jackson DK2, Trans Black
4151 - Jackson DK2M Dinky, Snow White
4150 - Jackson SL3MG Soloist, Natural
6787 - Levin LE100S Electric Guitar In Black
4948 - Levin LE500 Electric Guitar in White
7928 - MusicMan Albert Lee HH in Red
7929 - MusicMan Axis Super Sport Blue Burst
7091 - MusicMan Luke HSS, Pearl Blue
4720 - MusicMan Silhouette Special, Candy Red
4664 - MusicMan Silo 30, White
4806 - PRS CE24 in Cherry Pre-Owned
5049 - PRS Custom 24 USA in Black Slate Finish
5048 - PRS Custom 24 USA in Fire Red Burst
4631 - PRS HB1 USA Semi, Vintage Natural
5047 - PRS HB2 II USA Semi, Smoked Amber
6124 - Patrick Eggle Berlin Extra Lefty, Amber
5938 - Patrick Eggle Berlin Plus Lefty, Amber
6122 - Patrick Eggle Double Cutaway in Cherry
6123 - Patrick Eggle Double Cutaway in Blue
6176 - Patrick Eggle LA Custom Shop in Aqua
6175 - Patrick Eggle New Wave Extra in Black
6950 - Rickenbacker 330 12 String Semi Mapleglo
4268 - Rickenbacker 330 12 String Semi, Jetglo
4269 - Rickenbacker 360 12 String Semi, Jetglo
6951 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Fireglo
6952 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Jetglo
4270 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Mapleglo
4325 - Squier 50's Classic Vibe Tele, Blonde
4230 - Squier Standard Tele, Vintage Blonde
4234 - Squier Vintage Modified Jaguar HH, Red
4235 - Squier Vint Mod Jazzmaster Butterscotch
7951 - Taylor Solid Body Custom Koa
4256 - Vintage AV2, Sunburst
4257 - Vintage AV3 Semi, Cherry
6984 - Washburn DD60 Dan Donegan
6983 - Washburn DD61 Dan Donegan
6982 - Washburn USA DD70 Maya Dan Donegan, Grey
4757 - Washburn N1 Vintage Nuno Bettencourt Nat
6994 - Washburn PS7000, Paul Stanley Sig, Honey
7074 - Washburn SI61 Obey Scott Ian Sig, Black
7073 - Washburn USA SI75 Scott Ian Pro, Black
6991 - Washburn USA Custom WI556, Metallic Red
7005 - Washburn WI100, Gunmetal Grey
7002 - Washburn WI100, Red
7003 - Washburn WI100, White
7007 - Washburn WI26 Joe Trohman, Black
7006 - Washburn WI26 Joe Trohman, White
7356 - Washburn WI420KB Idol, Black
6986 - Washburn WI45 in Flamed Trans Red
6988 - Washburn WI50 in Black
6989 - Washburn WI50 Pro-E, Black
6879 - Washburn WI64, Distressed Vintage Black
6882 - Washburn WI666 in Blood / Chainsaw
6885 - Washburn WV40 Pro-E in Black
6886 - Washburn WV40V in Black
6995 - Washburn WV40VASIK Scott Ian Blood Splat
6890 - Washburn WV548 USA Custom, Black/White
6996 - Washburn WV66ANC, Nick Catanese, Black
6898 - Washburn Wi14 Idol in Metallic Blue
6899 - Washburn Wi14 Idol in Wine Red
6895 - Washburn X100 in Metallic Grey
6900 - Washburn X200 Pro in Trans Black
6901 - Washburn X200 Pro in Transparent Blue
6904 - Washburn X200V Pro in Black
6906 - Washburn X50 Pro in Quilted Trans Blue
6003 - Westcoast Q10 Electric Guitar in Blue
6425 - Westcoast ST Junior in Black & Sunburst
6449 - Westcoast ST1 in Ivory, Red & Natural
6030 - Yamaha Pacifica 012, Dark Blue Metallic
4372 - Yamaha Pacifica 112V, Black
6955 - Yamaha Pacifica 112V in Rasberry Red
6957 - Yamaha Pacifica 112V in Tobacco Sunburst
4780 - Yamaha Pacifica 112VCX, Vintage White
6963 - Yamaha Pacifica 120 in Yellow Nat Satin
4792 - Yamaha Pacifica 212VFM in Trans Black
7217 - Zemaitis GZMF501 BK Metal Front, Black
7212 - Zemaitis Metal Front MF501BL, Brown

Great Deals On Guitar Amplification

Fender Marshall Peavey Blackstar ORANGE LINE 6 Hughes & Kettner Roland

Bass Guitars

4588 - Alembic Epic 4, Natural
4556 - Bass Collection Jive Bass, Blue
4557 - Bass Collection Power Bass, Black
7479 - Breedlove JB350 CR4, Electro 4, Blonde
4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5038 - Duesenberg Starplayer 4, Trans Orange
7228 - Epiphone Les Paul Special, Black
7262 - Epiphone Thunderbird 4, Sunburst Finish
7233 - Epiphone Viola, Vintage Sunburst
4882 - Fender USA 62 Vintage Precision Sunburst
5091 - Fender 70s Jazz Bass, Black
7944 - Fender American Deluxe Jazz Bass, Black
7940 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
7943 - Fender Am Stan Precision Bass, Sunburst
7134 - Fender Highway One Bass, Sunburst
7076 - Fender Highway One Precision, Wine
7874 - Fender Kingman Bass, Electro 4, Natural
4749 - Fender Standard Precision, Candy Red
5572 - Fender Standard Precision, Arctic White
5190 - FleaBass The Wild One Junior, Black

Bass Guitars

4318 - Gibson SG Standard, Worn Cherry
4788 - Ibanez BTB475, Royal Blue
5120 - Lakland Skyline Bob Glaub Sig, Sunburst
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
4999 - Levin LB100J, Antique Sunburst
4735 - Levin LB100P, Black
6640 - Levin LB200, Cherry Sunburst
6781 - Levin LB200, Cherry Sunburst
6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst
7961 - MTD Artist Series MTKA4MP, Trans Black
4997 - MTD Kingston Heir, Trans Cherry
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Red
5216 - Marleaux Consat Custom 4, Dark Brown
4179 - Marleaux Consat Custom 5, Satin Black
5723 - Marleaux Consat Custom 6, Natural
4810 - Marleaux Consat Straight 5, Bordeaux
5713 - Marleaux M Bass Custom 5, Maple & Walnut
5453 - Marleaux Votan 5, Black
4178 - Marleaux Votan Deluxe 5, Blue Jeans
7927 - MusicMan Bongo Bass
7930 - MusicMan Sterling 4 String Bass in
4703 - MusicMan Stingray 2EQ, Blue Pearl
4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
4920 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
7923 - Musicman Gilded White Classic Stingray
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
7301 - Ovation USA Elite, Electro 4, Natural
4253 - Overwater Aspiration Artist, Trans Red
4254 - Overwater Aspiration Classic J, Ebony
4250 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe 4, Amber
4252 - Overwater Aspiration Elite Natural Brown
7849 - Overwater Contemporary Jazz, Trans Blue
4355 - Overwater UK Perception, Natural
5954 - Peavey Cirrus Series BXP, Redwood
5123 - Peavey USA Cirrus 5, Natural
7234 - Peavey Zodiac Stage Pack, Black
6909 - Rickenbacker 4001C64, Mapleglo
7890 - Rickenbacker 4003, Jetglo
6919 - Rickenbacker 4003, Mapleglo
4337 - Rockbass Corvette $$ Double Buck, Black
5122 - Rockbass Fortress 4, Blue
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
5309 - Rockbass Streamer Standard, Blue Stain
7204 - Squier Classic Vibe Precision 50s Blonde
7260 - Squier P Bass Std Sp Lefty Antique Burst
5719 - Squier Vint Mod 4 Fretless Jazz Sunburst
4615 - Squier Vintage Modified Jazz 77, Black
7138 - Squier Vintage Modified Jaguar, Black
7953 - Squier Vintage Modified Jazz Bass V
4328 - Steinberger Spirit XT25 5, Black
7922 - VMB75 Venture Series Bass Guitar
4648 - Warwick Corvette $$ 5 Ltd, Natural
7870 - Warwick Infinity 5, Natural
4663 - Warwick Pro Sries Corvette 4, Natural
4732 - Warwick Rockbass Corvette, Black
5952 - Warwick Streamer LX5, Emerald Green
4739 - Warwick Thumb 4 Bolt On, Natural
6447 - Westcoast BG2, Natural or Trans Red
6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
6445 - Westcoast BG5 Fretless, Natural
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Sunburst or Amber
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
7938 - Yamaha BB414, Orange Metallic
6953 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
5124 - Yamaha BBNEII Nathan East Model, Black
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
4889 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Natural
4374 - Yamaha TRB5 With Bubinga Top
7218 - Zemaitis BMF MCPJ BK Metal Front, Black

Great Deals On Bass Amplification

Mark Bass Marshall Peavey AER Hughes & Kettner GK Fender LINE 6

Acoustic Guitars

5260 - BSG OM15F, Orchestra Model, Natural
5002 - Breedlove AC250CR Lefty Electro, Natural
5003 - Breedlove AD200SM, Dreadnought, Natural
5004 - Breedlove AD20SR+, Dreadnought, Natural
5343 - Breedlove Passport C20 Travel Guitar
4282 - Breedlove Passport + D/SFE Elec Sunburst
7065 - Breedlove Passport + Travel, OM, Natural
4283 - Breedlove Solo C35/Sme Electro, Natural
4888 - Cort AD850CE-LH, Lefty, Electro, Natural
4894 - Cort Earth 200 Lefty Dreadnought Natural
4612 - Dave King Katrina Model 000, Sunburst
4613 - Dave King Louise, Koa, Parlour, Natural
4769 - EKO Ranger EQ Vintage Series, Black
6941 - Eko Ranger 12 String, Natural Satin
7295 - Epiphone AJ100CE, Dreadnought, Natural
4267 - Epiphone AJ220SCE Dreadnought Elec, Nat
4293 - Epiphone DR100 Dreadnought, Sunburst
4470 - Faith F000 Sig Standard 12 Fret Natural
7956 - Faith FECV Venus Cutaway Electro MKII
7255 - Faith Jupiter Trembesi Cutaway Electro
7254 - Faith Mercury Hi Gloss Electro-Acoustic
7957 - Faith Neptune High Gloss Cutaway
7958 - Faith Neptune Natural Cutaway
7959 - Faith Saturn Cutaway Natural Satin
5714 - Faith Saturn Eclipse FES, Electro, Black
4717 - Faith Venus II FV, Electro, Natural
6928 - Fender CD160SE Electro 12 String, Black
6975 - Fender CD60, Black
5096 - Fender CD60, Natural
5079 - Fender CD60, Sunburst

Acoustic Guitars

6943 - Fender CD60CE, Electro, Black
7024 - Fender CD60CE, Dreadnought, Electro, Nat
4335 - Fender CD60CE Dreadnought Elec, Sunburst
7881 - Fender Kingman SCE, Dreadnought, Natural
6932 - Fender Sonoran SCE Dreadnought, Natural
6929 - Fender Stratacoustic, Electro, Black
7918 - Gibson Blues King in Vintage Sunburst
5095 - Gibson Dove, Dreadnought Electro Natural
7032 - Gibson J200 Standard Jumbo Guitar
4173 - Gibson J45 Deluxe, Dreadnought, Sunburst
7062 - Gibson L200 Emmylou Harris Signature
7121 - Gitane Cigano GJ-0, Oval Hole, Natural
7120 - Gitane Cigano GJ5 Gypsy Jazz, Natural
7122 - Gitane D500 Gypsy Jazz, Natural
7216 - Gitane DG250 Gypsy Jazz, Natural
7252 - Guild USA D55 Dreadnought, Electro, Nat
5336 - Guild USA DV6, Dreadnought, Natural
4642 - Guild GADJF30, Jumbo Electro, Blonde
4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Ferro B&S
6948 - Jimmy Moon RD3, Electro, Natural
5601 - K Yairi G1F, Parlour, Vintage Sunburst
7090 - K Yairi New Yorker NY0021BSB, Sunburst
5602 - K Yairi WY1, Bob Weir Model, Natural
7966 - LAG 100A Tramontane Auditorium Acoustic
7304 - LAG T100ACE Cutaway Electro Brown Shadow
7968 - LAG T200D Dreadnought Acoustic
7303 - LAG T200DCE Dreadnought Electro, Natural
7969 - LAG T200JCE Jumbo Cutaway Electro
7299 - LAG T66A, French Satin Natural
7302 - LAG T66ACE Auditorium Cutaway Electro
7972 - LAG T200ACE Auditorium Cutaway Electric
7971 - LAG Tramontane T300AE Auditorium Electro
7970 - LAG T300D Dreadnought, Satin Finish
7967 - LAG T66D12 Dreadnought 12-String
6439 - Landola D200 Dreadnought Electro Natural
6438 - Landola DC200, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5615 - Landola M11 Dreadnought Electro, Natural
5412 - Levin LD30CE, Lefty Electro, Black
6784 - Levin LD30CE12, 12 String Electro, Black
5404 - Levin LD30CE12, 12 String Electro, Nat
5401 - Levin LD30CELH, Lefty Electro, Natural
5402 - Levin LD30CELH, Lefty Electro, Black
5405 - Levin LD45CE, Dreadnought Electro, Matt
5403 - Levin LD60CE, Dreadnought Electro, Blue
5399 - Levin LD60CELH, Lefty Electro, Black
5400 - Levin LD60CELH, Lefty Electro, Natural
5408 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Black
5407 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Blue
5409 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Mid Brown
5410 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Natural
5398 - Levin LS500LCE, Lefty Electro, Black
5397 - Levin LS500LCE, Lefty Electro, Natural
5406 - Levin LS600CE, Small Electro, Natural
4754 - Martin Custom X Series Electro, Natural
6010 - Martin 00028EC Eric Clapton, Natural
4317 - Martin 0028VS, Parlour, Natural
5835 - Martin Backpacker Acoustic Travel Guitar
6554 - Martin D18 Dreadnought, Natural
5702 - Martin D28 Dreadnought, Natural
6008 - Martin D35 Dreadnought, Natural
5013 - Martin D41 Dreadnought, Natural
4315 - Martin D45 Dreadnought, Natural
5215 - Martin LXME Travel, Electro, Natural
6007 - Martin OM21 Orchesta, Natural
4402 - Northwood MAN80 Mini Jumbo Mango Electro
6405 - Northwood R70D, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
6404 - Northwood R70 00 14fret Electro, Natural
4400 - Northwood R80, 000V Electro, Natural
6403 - Northwood R80, 0M Electro, Natural
4401 - Northwood Z1R80, 000 Ziricote Electro
7764 - Ovation Balladeer Country Artist, Nylon
4666 - Ovation CDX44 FKOA, Electro, Koa Top
6254 - Ovation USA 2005 Collectors Ed, Natural
4855 - PJ Eggle Etowah, 000, 12 Fret, Natural
7253 - PJ Eggle Linville C, OM, Natural
4779 - PJ Eggle Linville Gareth Pearson Electro
4856 - PJ Eggle Saluda C, Small Jumbo Elec, Nat
4857 - PJ Eggle Saluda, Small Jumbo, Natural
7915 - Pilgrim by Vintage VPG100
6115 - Rally Resonator
4620 - Recording King RM996 Resonator, Green
5258 - Satori YD18CEQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5257 - Satori YD18EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5254 - Satori YD28CEQ Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5256 - Satori YD28EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5252 - Satori YD28HEQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5255 - Satori YO28HEQ, OM Electro, Natural
4192 - Tanglewood TW145ASC, Electro, Natural
4193 - Tanglewood TW170AS Grand Concert Natural
4419 - Vintage V1100N Dreadnought, Natural
4446 - Vintage VJ100 CSB Jumbo, Cherry Sunburst
7238 - Washburn D46S Dreadnought, Natural
7239 - Washburn D46s12, 12 String, Natural
7240 - Washburn J27CEK Jumbo Electro Java Ebony
7242 - Washburn J28S12DL, 12 String, Natural
6016 - Westcoast AG2 Acoustic Guitar in Natural
7225 - Yamaha APX500 MKII, Electro, Blue
7224 - Yamaha APX500 MKII, Electro, Red
5632 - Yamaha F310 Dreadnought, Natural
5592 - Yamaha FG720S Dreadnought, Natural
4332 - Yamaha FG740 Dreadnought Cherry Sunburst
4334 - Yamaha FSX720SC Small Body Electro Black
6966 - Yamaha FX370C Dreadnought Electro, Black
7364 - Yamaha JR2, Compact Travel, Sunburst
7290 - Yamaha JR2 Compact Travel, Natural
5617 - Yamaha LL16L, Lefty Electro, Natural

Great Deals On Acoustic Amplification

Roland Marshall Peavey AER Fender SR FISHMAN

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

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Seven days is a long time...

Yes, you could accuse this month's cover feature of being a grand statement. And no; we don't think our week-long course can get a non-guitar player from zero to busting out a note-perfect Brian May-esque rendition of *God Save The Queen* on the roof of Buckingham Palace (or anywhere else, for that matter) after seven days.

But you can get a lot done in a week, and the feedback we've received after running previous articles of this nature is that it does focus the mind. After relatively little concentrated step-by-step practise you can quickly see some progress, thereby getting you closer to where you want to be. It also helps in convincing yourself that, regardless of how little time you have to play, you can still move forwards. We hope you get something out of it, and please let us know how you got on (and we promise we won't come over all Drill Sergeant if it takes longer than a week).

When resting those weary fingers after spending time learning from the Queen legend, kick back and absorb yourself in some gear reviews including releases from Gibson and Fender, top-class interviews with the likes of Jack Bruce, some righteous vintage gear – or work out which amp-changing mod you should try first. And if you fancy some more learnin' after Brian May, you can move on to a Chet Atkins or John Entwistle workshop – you brave, music-lovin' souls, you. Enjoy the issue...

John

In this issue

March 2012 Vol 23 No 06

COVER STORY

REGAL RIFFAGE

20

Immerse yourself in our cunningly-crafted seven-day course in the style and techniques of Queen's Brian May

Photo: Michael Putland/Getty

Interviews

Jack Bruce 28
The bass legend looks back on his Cream days – and forward to some jazz and blues to come

Jon Amor 32
The ex-Hoax blues guitarist is back with a keen band and a raw, uncompromising new record

Johnny Marr 36
Getting down to the nuts and bolts with a finely-honed, stage-ready signature Fender

Rodrigo Y Gabriela 42
Re-recording some old songs with Cuban musicians led to a thrilling new direction

Workshops

Great amp modding tips 106
Does your amplifier have untapped sonic potential? Here's how to release the beast

Play like Chet Atkins 112
Style, pure class and sweet melodies: examining the classic *Guitar Man*

John Entwistle workshop 120
The British bass master's playing on his band's best-ever studio album, *Who's Next*

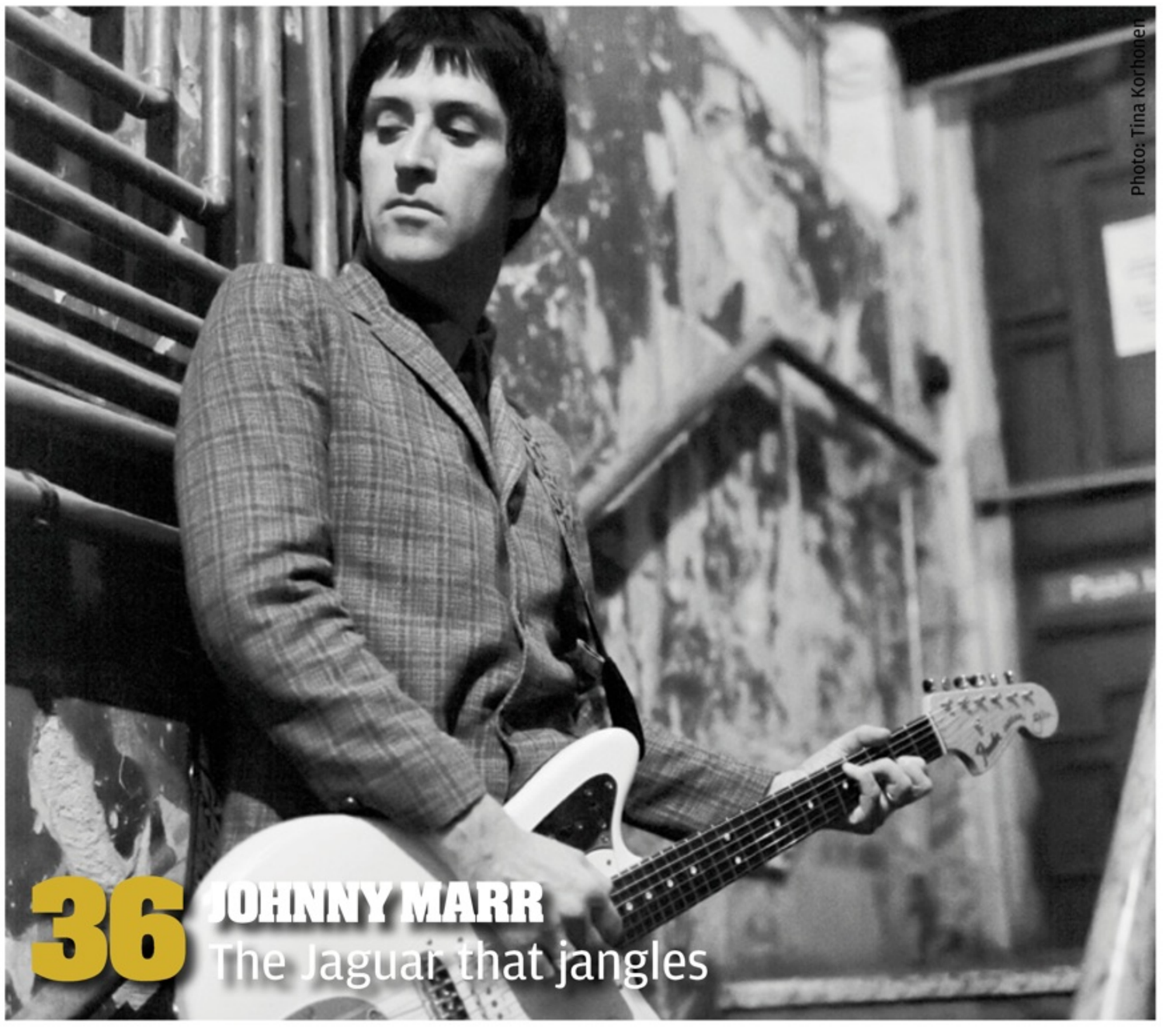

Photo: Tina Korhonen

36 JOHNNY MARR
The Jaguar that jangles

Regulars

LETTERS 8 NEWS 10 SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE 13 TALES FROM THE ROAD 16 ALBUMS 18

Cover photo: Mayer/Pictorialpress

Gear

Fender Marauder 48
New territory for Fender with a triple-coil whammy-equipped modern/retro original

Gibson Melody Maker Special 52
As cheap as cut-price chips and with a pair of P90s, this budget blaster surely cannot fail

Hagstrom electrics 56
Dare to be different with the semi-solid Viking Rex Tone and the solidbody Ultralux

H&K TubeMeister 18 60
Hughes & Kettner cram 18 valve watts plus digital reverb into a weeny 1x10" combo

Avid Eleven Rack 64
Amp and FX modeller, recording interface and a whole lot more – this is one clever box

Mariner Cutter & Eunoia-OM 74
A sweet parlour and an all-rounder OM built with guilt-free timbers throughout

Lag Tremontane acoustics 78
With woody art nouveau looks and the option of a clever electro system

Sandberg California TT 5-string 84
A modern low-B take on a well-loved classic with superb quality and top sounds

Markbass FX pedals 88
Bumblebee-coloured fun with a bass octaver pedal and a valve-sounding distortion

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when you subscribe
PAGE 82

Vintage

Private Collection 90
Epiphones, Gibsons, Hondos, Columbuses and a host of '60s weirdos: Tony Keen's guitars might not be blue-chip, but he's got an eye for a great instrument at a great price

Hooked On Classics 102
Phil Harris has had 'em all, but there's nothing like a guitar that you love without any thought of rarity or value. Here are five players that are never going anywhere, ever

The Bishop of Denmark Street 105
In part 2 of Sid Bishop's column on his days behind the counter at the legendary Top Gear, he remembers the point at which he hit a fork in the road. Something had to give...

TREASURED POSSESSIONS **46** SUBSCRIPTION OFFER **82** READERS FREE ADS **144** BACKSTAGE **146**

Reverberations

Write to *Guitar & Bass*, Anthem Publishing, Station House, Station Approach, 33 North Street, Carshalton, SM5 2HW or e-mail us: guitarandbass@anthem-publishing.com
Please note, we reserve the right to edit where we feel it is appropriate, or to print extracts from longer correspondences

STAR LETTER

COUNTER FEAT

With regards to the Feb 2012 cover feature on fake guitars, the question is how did the counterfeit industry come into being, and why are so many guitars made in places like China, Vietnam and South Korea? The simple answer is that famous, original brand name guitars are too expensive for the majority of buyers worldwide who are not pros – and they always have been. You could understand it back in the early days when production was more labour-intensive, but things have moved on. Add to that some of these models are classic designs, virtually unchanged after decades. Two or three grand for a guitar, especially something like a solidbody, is still a lot of money for many people.

I believe the price structure has less to do with quality and production costs and more to do with elitism. 'I can afford it, I can justify the cost – you can't, so you make do with a less prestigious instrument.' The problem is, as we have seen, the lesser instrument often does the job just as well, especially after one or two mods.

Vincent Ludvico *via email*

Our cover story on fake guitars seems to have got people talking about the subject from all angles. We've had responses from across the range from readers and people within the industry that go from a strictly no-tolerance policy towards fakes of any kind to a much more laidback 'well, there's not much that can done, so why bother?' attitude – and all points inbetween.

The question you ask about how counterfeit guitars came into being is a fine one, and to our mind brings in a number of factors, such as availability, opportunity and demand.

However, regardless of what you think of the reasons why people and companies started to make counterfeit guitars, does that justify actually doing it? After all, if someone thinks they can make a better, cheaper guitar than one of the big names, they're welcome to do so – no one's making them copy the body shape, the headstock or name. You state that some of the original names charge too much? That's your (and we're sure other people's) opinion. Lord knows, everyone on this magazine has a large wish-list of instruments they'd buy if they could afford it – the same way that you'd might want a bigger/better car or house. It doesn't justify squatting or car theft – in the eyes of the law at least.

Capitalism doesn't award good guitars to people who'd love them and get a lot out of them (or stop people who don't appreciate them from buying them). But if people stop buying guitars from a certain maker because they're too expensive (for whatever reason), said maker will work out a way of making cheaper instruments people will buy or it will eventually cease trading. And we know from experience that you can love playing guitar without spending a lot of money, or breaking the law. Whether you think the laws regarding copyright should be there in the first place – now that's one big debate waiting to happen...

Rosetti

Written a Star Letter? Contact Rosetti on 01376 550033 to claim your Fusion gig bag – electric, acoustic or bass available!

SEARCH AND YE SHALL FIND

Guitar & Bass is always a good read, but the recent February issue struck some old chords (sorry). In particular Sid Bishop's piece about Denmark St brought back memories. Sid, while working in Top Gear, sold me a 1960 coral pink (NOT fiesta red) rosewood-neck Strat for £120! This was in January, 1971, long before the vintage guitar market was invented. I just wish I'd kept it! I also saw him at a college in Enfield when he was playing in the Deviants back in 1969, who were 'punk' years before the Pistols, etc.

Also, the interview with Frank Allen reminded me of when, in 1973, my band, Big Ladder Woman (don't ask) supported the Searchers at the Cross Keys pub in Edmonton, north London. The Searchers, as I remember, were really slick and professional. But, most importantly of all, they were all friendly blokes, unlike many whose paths I've crossed during my career. Oh, by the way, he's got some tasty guitars as well.

Rob Angelo *via email*

G&B **Glad you enjoyed the article – we can also happily vouch for the fact that Frank Allen is an absolute gent – as well as Sid Bishop's new column. And Sid will be pleased to know that you had a positive Top Gear experience (heck, we all regret selling stuff).**

BASS BEAUTIES

I have a couple of great basses I'd like to share with you and your readers. The first is a Rickenbacker 2030 model I bought from Treblerock in Bristol for £340 (this was in the '80s). It has a bolt-on neck as it was meant to compete with Fender basses. It was made in USA and has a great Rickenbacker sound. I used it as a gigging bass until 1987.

The second is a Gibson EB-1 I bought from a music shop in Stroud back in 1983. It has plastic bridge saddles and the body looks as if has been rubbed back to the wood and the headstock. It's kept in a huge oblong case that's a bit tatty – the

...And his Gibson EB-1

strap button unscrews, so you can put a spike in to play upright. Both are well-loved by the owner.

David Bailey *via email*

TEACH AN OLD DOG NO TRICKS

I read with interest Keith Edward's letter in the February 2012 issue about him being 67 and still having the desire to play his guitar. It was Rory Gallagher who said in interview that he'd play till he dropped (never a truer word, unfortunately). I thought I'd also let the younger generation know that there are 'older' guitarists out there still doing it. I'm 59 and have 13 guitars and a few different amp setups, including a Fender Metalhead stack, a Marshall 100W Triple Lead stack, a couple of small combos and a bass setup.

I've been playing guitar since I was 12. I do home recording and I'm currently using the famous Berkley 2 rehearsal rooms in Glasgow with two colleagues (we are all lecturers) with our new band, Teacher. The desire is as strong as it ever was, and when people say 'Don't you think you're getting a bit old for this?' they clearly just don't understand what we musicians get out of it. Good on you, Keith. Old guitarists don't die, they just get so good that the younger generation can't live with them.

Davie Garden *via email*

G&B **Good on ya, Davie, for keeping up the fine six-string cause. Long may it continue...**

BLISTERING SUCCESS

The problem I find with playing the bass fingerstyle is that very painful and bloody blisters develop within a very short time, making continued playing difficult or impossible! The only way to avoid blisters is to play with a plectrum. Are there any finger caps on the market that will stop these damn blisters?

I Fox *Northampton*

G&B **Ah, those pesky blisters. Playing fingerstyle can cause pain, but the principle is the same as for dealing with any problems in your fretting hand. The sensible method to deal with them is to build up the callouses gently over time. If a blister does develop, don't pop it, as the fluid beneath is the body's way of warning the skin to harden up. Players such as Mark King apply tape to the relevant areas in an attempt to minimise the damage. Has anyone got any tried-and-tested methods to avoid/minimise the pain before those blessed callouses appear on the digits?**

FRETS ON FIRE II: STILL FRETTING

You published my letter in the Oct 2009 issue about how a group of friends and I got the guitar bug after setting ourselves the challenge at Glastonbury Festival to play one tune to the group the following year. Having successfully achieved our goal, you might think that the buzz would have faded, guitars put in the loft – or even sold – and that would be an end. Sadly for our guitar-widow wives this was not the case: our midlife crisis rumbled on.

After the challenge was over I continued getting lessons from Chris at Palfreymans. Just before Christmas 2011, three of us hired a practise room for a few hours to play a few tunes. We were pretty awful, but there was something about this session we all knew we were going to have to revisit. Next I managed to talk another friend out of 25 years of retirement to play drums; after only one session he also had the bug. Along the way we enlisted our bass player, and we've gone from fortnightly sessions to weekly.

I cannot describe to you the buzz we all get out of this. It's like watching your favourite football team win the FA cup. When we enter the practise room it's like a time machine, and we all return to the age of 17 for a couple of hours.

We are left with one dilemma: to gig or not to gig? Some think that the buzz of the practise room is enough; the rest think that the practise room will not always be enough of a challenge. What do you think... don't spoil something that's already good, or bite the bullet and set a new challenge?

Andy Lintern *via email*

G&B **Outstanding effort! Why not plan on doing a gig once a year for a special occasion, like a birthday, or something to commemorate the Glastonbury gig? Practising is a good buzz... taking it to the people is even better.**

Andy and band: is rehearsal enough?

Woke up this mornin'... NEWS

Photo: Gregg Roth

Crash Survivor

Peter Frampton has been miraculously reunited with the cherished Gibson Les Paul that helped him hit the big time

When a cargo plane carrying all his gear crashed en route to a show in Panama 32 years ago, Peter Frampton thought he had lost his '54 Gibson Les Paul forever. Imagine his delight when two fans tracked the guitar down to the Caribbean island of Curacao. The guitar was sent to the US, and experts from Gibson and Frampton himself verified that it was indeed the long-lost instrument. Frampton was given the guitar in 1970 by a fan named Mark Mariana at a Humble Pie gig at the Filmore West, and went on to use it to record Humble Pie's *Rock On* and *Rocking The Filmore* as well as his live double LP *Frampton Comes Alive!*

'I'm still in a state of shock,' says Frampton. 'First off, that the guitar even exists... let alone that it has been returned to me. I know I have my guitar back, but I will never forget the lives that were lost in this crash. I am so thankful to those who made this possible. I'm going insure it for two million dollars and it's never going out of my sight again! It was always my number one guitar, and after some minor repairs it will be reinstated there as soon as possible. And I just can't wait to get Mark Mariana on the phone.' The celebrations for the 35th anniversary of *Frampton Comes Alive!* will continue into 2012, so keep your eyes peeled for tour dates and you may get to see the guitar.

Winter NAMM returns

The year's biggest music industry expo returned to the Anaheim Convention Centre in California earlier this month, bringing with it a bounty of products for guitarists to salivate over in the coming year. Featuring over 1,00 exhibitors, the show included new lines from all the major players including Fender, Gibson, Orange, Martin, Line 6, Roland and Marshall as well as many of the smaller boutique companies. See next issue's full NAMM report for all the choice pickings...

SHOW TOON

The Newcastle Guitar Show is back and bigger than ever. This excellent day out offers attendees the chance to buy, sell and trade new, vintage and second hand gear and there'll be the usual show bargains to get your teeth into too, as well as a handy appraisal service to give your gear the once over. Exhibitors include Patrick Eggle, Roland Boss, Vintage/Fret-King and Jackson International. The live schedule is packed with musical treats too including the Mitch Laddie Band, Gavin Coulson for Vintage/Fret-King, shred-demon Al Ridgway for Patrick Eggle Guitars and 'fusion specialist' Ashley Hutchings demoing the latest that Roland has to offer. The show takes place at the Federation Brewery in Dunston, Gateshead on Sunday 11th March between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Admission £6; 01925 813185; www.guitarshows.co.uk

SQUIER UNLEASHES A TRIO OF SIGNATURE MODELS

Just out: two Teles and a Competition Mustang Bass

Something for our younger readers from Squier this month with a new threesome that nicely covers metal, emo and pop rock. First up is Avril Lavigne's all-black signature Tele, which has a three-ply pickguard, a rosewood fretboard with 12th fret skull and crossbones logo, black headstock, standard humbuckers and 22 medium jumbo frets. Slipknot guitarist Jim Root's signature Tele is an axe that should serve the discerning metaller with aplomb; it has a simple look with satin matte finish in black or white, black tuners and two black-covered passive humbuckers with a modest single knob/single switch control system to match. Finally, Squier goes glam with My Chemical Romance's Mikey Way's signature Mustang Bass. Features include a shimmering large-flake silver sparkle finish, black racing stripes, a black headstock with silver logo and signature on the reverse, 19 medium jumbo frets, and a single passive humbucker. See www.fender.com/squier for more.

Building blox

Source Audio is releasing three new units that make up their Soundblox 2 series this month. They're thoroughly pleasing to the eye with ice cool looks and a sturdy, solid cast-aluminium housing that holds all the award-winning magic within. Included in the range are two Multiwave Distortion pedals, one for bass and one for guitar and both with a three-band tone control and noisegate, and their new proposition, the Dimension Reverb, with 12 reverb sounds designed by effects guru Bob Chidlaw. More information over at www.sourceaudio.net.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Android Toneprint

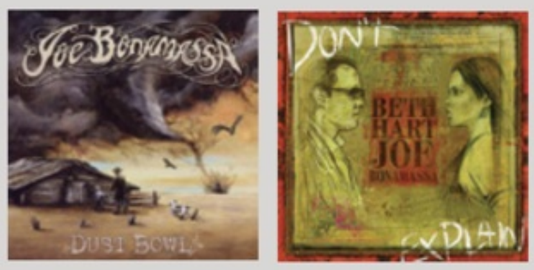
iPhone users have had it for a while, but now TC Electronic have released their revolutionary TonePrint app for Android device users to join in the fun as well. This innovative new app allows players to 'beam' different TonePrint effects straight into their pedals in seconds. It works by converting the TonePrint into a magnetic impulse that is beamed through your phone's internal speaker into your guitar's pickups and then into your TonePrint pedal. Genius! See www.tcelectronic.com

Godin launches Seagull website

Godin has unveiled a brand new website for its Seagull brand of acoustic guitars. Browse the site for info on all the guitars in their six lines – Entourage, Performer, Original, Maritime SWS, Coastline and Artist – with details on new models and specs, video demos, endorsees and much more. The address: www.seagullguitars.com

Bonamassa nomination

Les Paul-slinging guitar ace Joe Bonamassa has been nominated for the 23rd Blues Music Awards, both with his stunning solo album *Dust Bowl* and also with the excellent *Don't Explain*, his collaboration with singer Beth Hart. Other nominees include Warren Haynes, Mike Zito and Ian Siegal. Joe Bonamassa will be on tour in throughout the UK in March. Visit www.jbonamassa.com for tickets and info.



Calendar SHOWS, GIGS, FESTIVALS, WORKSHOPS

Michael Schenker UK Tour

MAY

Iconic rock guitarist Michael Schenker will be playing live for four 'Temple Of Rock' shows in the UK in May. The band features the ex-Scorpions rhythm section of Herman Rarebill (drums) and Francis Buchholz (bass).

WHERE? **Wolverhampton (9), Manchester (10), Glasgow (11) and London (12)**
TICKETS **See venues**
CONTACT **0844 478 0898; www.thegigcartel.com**

Blues On The Bay 2012

MAY 24-28

Two siblings of the stars performing here – Leon Hendrix, Jimi's brother, and Jack Moore, son of the late great Gary Moore. Expect 90 great gigs and a big-name headline to be announced soon.

WHERE? **Warrenpoint, County Down, N Ireland**
TICKETS **£TBC**
CONTACT **www.bluesonthebay.com**

Acoustic Blues Weekend

MARCH 2-4

This weekend workshop includes classes in country blues guitar from John Miller, slide guitar with Sonny Black and harmonica with Eddie Martin. There'll also be evening jams and performances.

WHERE? **The Atrix, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire**
TICKETS **£135 (weekend registration fee); £80 (Sat only); £65 (Sunday)**
CONTACT **01242 701 765; www.euroblues.co.uk**

Bowness Bay Blues weekend

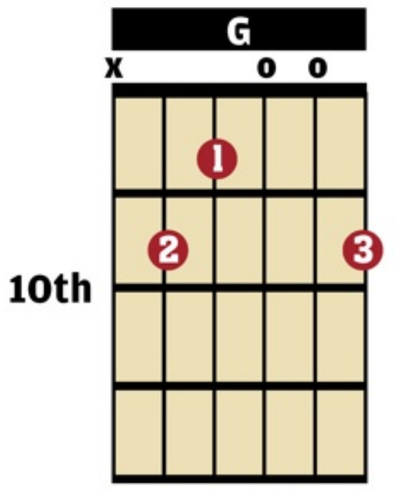
MARCH 30 TO APRIL 1

A new festival taking place in the picturesque surroundings of Bowness, bordering the beautiful Lake Windermere in the heart of the Lake District. Headliners include Paul Lamb & the King Snakes, Connie Lush and the Jon Amor Blues Group.

WHERE? **Venues around Bowness**
TICKETS **£30 (three-day ticket); £10 (day ticket)**
CONTACT **www.bownessbayblues.co.uk**

The Lost Chord

This may be a G, but it's no ordinary G! The combination of open strings and notes high up the fretboard means than this chord contains two pairs of unisons – that is, two pairs of notes of the same pitch. This makes it rather reminiscent of a chord on a 12-string guitar. Can you say 'chimey'?



Woke up this mornin'... NEWS

Fret-King Black Label

New from JHS/Fret-King are 12 fresh models that make up the progressive new Black Label Series. Trevor Wilkinson's mission statement was to produce affordable guitars that combined boutique design and custom-shop quality, and with the help of pro musicians including Jerry Donahue and Dave 'Bucket' Colwell, a variety of new models were developed. The collection includes the stylish single-cut Eclat; the Country Squire; the Elise, designed in cooperation with Gordon Giltrap; the Corona; the Super-Hybrid; and the intriguingly-named Perception.

'Part of the design brief was to prove the point that it's possible to create guitars that really raise the bar while being affordable to any player,' said Dennis Drumm, JHS's Managing Director. 'We love a challenge – see these guitars and you'll be amazed. Unique and distinctive, memorable and reliable, 101 per cent playable. Black Label represents tomorrow's classics today.' Bold claims, for sure... but with these stylish guitars and basses already receiving rave reviews we can't wait to put one through its paces. See www.fret-king.com.

BRISTOL FOLK FESTIVAL

Those who fancy a musical May bank holiday should get down to the Bristol Folk Festival at Bristol's Colston Hall on 5-7 May where twice-Grammy nominated Afro-Celt Soundsystem will be bringing their fusion of trad Celtic and African sounds to the stage on Monday night. Joining them on the bill are around 40 performers including Show Of Hands, Cara Dillon, Karine Polwart and jovial world music trio 3 Daft Monkeys. There's also workshops, jam sessions and three floors of treasures in the indoor market. For tickets visit www.colstonhall.org, buy over the counter at the Bristol Ticket Shop, or call the Box Office on 0117 922 3686; tickets cost £80 (weekend), £250 (family ticket: two adults, two children).

Web corner THIS MONTH'S VIRAL GUITAR CLIP

Angelo Debarre: *Hungaria*

http://bit.ly/ynoVQE

A wonderful slice of live gypsy jazz guitar this month brought to you by the manouche jazz legend Angelo Debarre. The show was recorded in 2008 at the Theatre L'Alhambra, Paris and reveals why Debarre is revered by guitarists everywhere. Supported by a storming rhythm guitarist and an animated double bass player, Debarre plays a note-perfect and truly spellbinding version of *Hungaria* that'll have you instantly hooked.

SECRET SHOPPA

ROCK HARD MUSIC

MILTON KEYNES

CONTACT **01908 314300**

www.rockhard-music.com

Although situated on an industrial estate in the Old Wolverton district of Milton Keynes with plenty of free car parking, the full-size Marshall stack set in the brick wall denotes this store is a far cry from neighbouring carpet shops. Rock Hard Music is pure rock'n'roll in all its glory

Layout

One step in the door and you're greeted by rows of amps stacked skyward and a vast selection of wall to wall guitars offering a great selection from affordable quality to high end models with demo areas for acoustic, electric and bass players to get to grips with some cool instruments

Range of gear

These include some alternative models and finishes from PRS, Ibanez, ESP, Fret-King, DBZ, Vintage, Dean, LTD, Italia, Yamaha, Faith, LAG, Breedlove, Crafter, Cort, St Blues, Walden and Ashton. Rock Hard Music has become one of the Marshall flagship stores and most models are here along with a big selection of heads, cabs and combos from Hughes & Kettner, Blackstar, Vox, Laney, Spector, Markbass, Eden and Peavey.

Secondhand gear

Says owner Ronnie 'The Boss', 'We're in the ideal spot here – just out of town where players can come in and try out new and secondhand gear, do a part-exchange or talk about sales on commission. There's always a good selection.'

Best bargain in the shop

Lots happening here. Whether you're a fan or not, Lamb Of God's Will Adler's signed signature LTD WA200 was a good deal at £599, while a Kustom HV head and cab was down from £856 to £586

Highlight

Rock Hard Music has a lot to offer for the pro musician plus serious encouragement for the beginner. They work with schools, provide PA hire and backline with storage facilities, a fully equipped 24-track studio and drum and guitar tuition; there's a workshop for all repairs, and set-ups are all part of the service. Look out for demo nights with high profile players airing their skills

Conclusion

Very cool – and there's real coffee, too.

VITAL STATISTICS

Layout	**19**/20
Staff knowledge	**19**/20
Staff helpfulness	**19**/20
Range of new gear	**18**/20
Range of secondhand gear	**15**/20
Parking	**Lots, and free**
TOTAL	**90%**

Soundtrack of my life

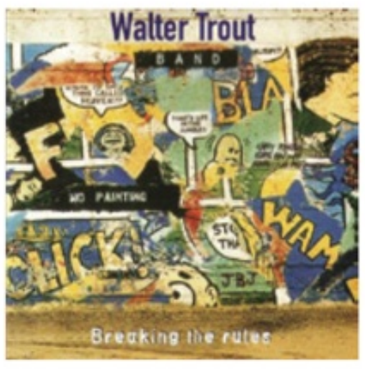
Danny Bryant

As UK blues booms once more, we ask one of its leading exponents what records get him all fired up

The UK blues scene has seen many young guitar prodigies burn brightly and then fade, but Danny Bryant's fretwork just gets more explosive with every passing year. Now 31 years old, he's clocked up thousands of gigs across the country, and the blues rock fraternity are beginning to whisper that he might just be 'the British Bonamassa'. To bring these powerful performances to your living room Danny and his Red Eye Band have made a live DVD entitled *Night Life*. 'We wanted to capture a regular gig – the kind that we do around 100 nights a year,' Bryant says. Well, if he's on this form every night we'll be seeing you down at the front when he hits town.

Walter Trout
BREAKING THE RULES

This was the album that first made me want to play guitar. In the beginning you tend to find one influence and go mad on it, so really it shaped my sound. I still use it as a kind of map today. I was 15 and I wrote Walter a letter, so he rang me up! He was so encouraging... he became a mentor and a great friend.



Eric Clapton
FROM THE CRADLE

I always liked the poppy Clapton stuff my parents played, but this was when I realised what all the fuss around Eric was really about. Tracks like *Five Long Years* are incredible... just ferocious guitar. It was brave, too. People wanted the hits and were walking out of gigs. I don't think he ever played better.

Buddy Guy
STONE CRAZY!

People said you couldn't capture the live power of Buddy in the studio but Walter Trout pointed me in the direction of this album and it's phenomenal. It was made in 1981, a dark period for him – his daughter had died and bankruptcy loomed. They recorded it in one night, and Buddy just went for it. Brilliant!

Stevie Ray Vaughan
IN STEP

Guys coming up now probably all have a Bonamassa album that's special to them, but for anyone of my age in blues rock, SRV has to be an influence. People say Stevie was at his best when he was on the booze and drugs but I think as they were all in rehab this one is a bit more focused. I just love *Crossfire*.

BB King
LIVE IN JAPAN

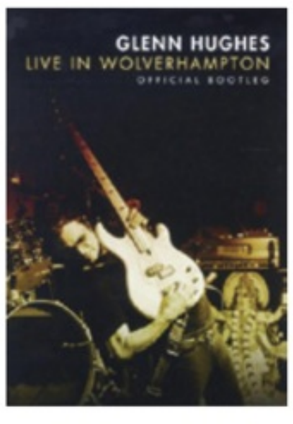
This was made in '71 when BB was riding high. *The Thrill Has Gone* had come out in 1970 and he was feeling his success. He's more restrained these days, but back then with his 335 going into a cranked Twin, he was devastating – the best embassador for the blues. I've never heard another guitar with such a lyrical voice.

John Hiatt
DIRTY JEANS AND MUDSLIDE HYMNS

This was my favourite of last year but it's now on my best-ever list. Kevin Shirley produced it, and it's sonically one of the best-sounding albums I've ever heard. John is usually more of a country ballads man, but he shook it all up with a rock edge and it's absolutely fantastic. It hasn't been off the CD player.

DVD of the month

Live In Wolverhampton
GLENN HUGHES
Ear Music



30-odd years on and in his own backyard, the 'Voice Of Rock' re-visits his Deep Purple and Trapeze days with blistering versions of classic tunes played with the passion and energy of a teenager

Fender goodies

Fender has dished out a new batch of accessories to begin the year including a dapper and durable Pro Series hardcase, a smart Custom Shop Reunion Blues Bag with a tough 'flexoskeleton', steel and nylon plectrums, new ABS moulded cases, hard-wearing Performance Series cables, lots of new pickups, a chunky new versatile guitar stand, and a neat little clip-on tuner. Fill your boots! More at www.fender.com.

STUFF

Some choice products that have caught our eye this month

USA ROCKSLIDE – SWAMP SLIDE

Bottleneck aficionados are sure to salivate at the sight of these beauties designed for top tone and maximum sustain. Available in three sizes and delectable aged finishes like silver, gold and brass

PRICE **£16** CONTACT **www.therockslide.com**

JOE BONAMASSA BOBBLE HEAD

Need a gift for a serious Joe Bonamassa fan? Look no further than the 2nd Edition Bobble Head complete with signature silver suit, Flying V and Marshall stack

PRICE **$39.99**

CONTACT **www.jbonamassa.com**

DEAN MARKLEY LOVE POTION

Dean Markley is bringing back Love Potion #9, their original guitar polish, this month. It's pretty good stuff for keeping your guitar in tip top condition

PRICE **£4.99**

CONTACT **www.deanmarkley.com**

ORANGE PRO CABLES

Orange Amp's new high-performance cables offer oxygen-free electrolytic tough pitch pure copper... we're pretty sure that means they'll do the job commendably. Oh, and they come in black too

PRICE **£TBC** CONTACT **www.orangeamps.com**

ROTOSOUND ATC-10 TUNER/CHORD FINDER

Clip Rotosound's new ATC-10 Tuner/Chord Finder to your guitar and it'll use string vibrations to help you stay in tune. You can also use the onboard chord finder to search a huge library of chords and expand your knowledge

PRICE **£17.95** CONTACT **www.rotosound.com**

Decisions, decisions

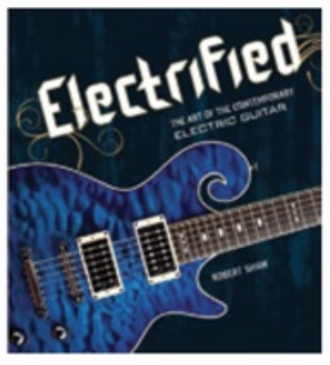
Hayden has been showing off their new bespoke service at NAMM 2012, which allows guitarists to personalise all aspects of their amps. You can explore your inner artist by completely customising the look of your chosen noisebox with colour and style options, while on the inside a myriad of choices means you can engineer a tone that's yours and yours alone. Whether it's tubes, speaker selection, gain structure, tone stack, reverb selection or attenuation, feel free to mix and match to your heart's desire. See www.haydenamps.com

Book of the month

Electrified: The Art Of The Contemporary Electric Guitar

ROBERT SHAW

Sterling Signature



125 custom-built guitars made by some of the world's top luthiers for the likes of Clapton, Richards and Gilmour are profiled, along with their creators. The photography is droolsome

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– Paul Riario, Guitar World Magazine

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Queen rockumentary

Eagle Rock Entertainment have released their seminal Queen documentary *Days Of Our Lives* on DVD and Blu-ray to tie in with the end of the band's 40th anniversary year. The two-part documentary, originally broadcast on BBC2 last year, tells the story of one of the rock world's most treasured bands. The first part covers the period from 1970 to 1980, while part two continues to the present. There's interviews with Brian May and Roger Taylor, some great archive footage (including the band's first-ever TV performance), as well as additional videos featuring unseen footage, promos and bonus sequences. More info over at www.queenonline.com

WE'VE BEEN AD...

SOMETHING FISHY

When, in 1967, Gibson's execs seated themselves around the boardroom table for some blue sky thinking intended to boost sales of their popular Epiphone line, you'd be forgiven for thinking they'd plump for the straightforward, classy approach. After all, according to the poster, these are guitars that sell themselves. 'Dealers don't push 'em a lot, celebrities don't endorse 'em a lot', they boast, alongside über-confident claims like 'all the sales help Epiphone really needs' is to 'just let 'em play it'. On the strength of their unswerving confidence surely a simple photograph would suffice? It appears not. We imagine the boardroom conversation went a little like this:

Exec 1: 'Any guitarist who happens upon an Epiphone and gives it a strum is sure to go ahead and buy one... let's just show a shot of the Rivera.'

Exec 2: 'Oh compleeeetely! Buuut, just to be toootally sure... how about we employ a LSD-crazed cartoonist with a family-size pack of economy marker pens to draw a big multi-coloured fish playing one, just in case, eh?'

Tales from the road

Smash & Grab

Fake guitars from China, bizarre online payment conditions: the devious **Adi Vines** has found a way of linking the two

January is usually a quiet time for chaps like me, so I was glad to hear the thump of last month's copy of this magazine hitting my doormat as the chance to escape the drudgery of daytime TV with some guitar-based reading was very welcome. I was particularly interested to read the article on fake guitars, as a neat piece of synchronicity meant that it arrived on the same day that I heard about an incident involving an allegedly fake antique violin that was recently sold on a well-known auction website.

After receiving the item, the buyer was suspicious about its authenticity and made a complaint to PayPal (the service used to pay for the instrument). In a shocking turn of events, and reportedly without any verification of the buyer's claims, PayPal refunded his money and instructed him to *destroy the item*. Now, I suspect that many of the details of this story have yet to emerge but PayPal have given it legitimacy by issuing a statement to the effect of 'no comment' and pointing to the complexities of the law regarding counterfeit products.

> There's no need to resort to impotent international copyright laws: PayPal is happy to make things right

It was only a couple of weeks ago that a guitar tech colleague of mine told me that PayPal had done a similar thing to him. After selling a guitar online to a novice buyer, who complained to PayPal that he hadn't yet received the item a mere 48 hours after the auction had ended, the money was refunded without question. PayPal then washed their hands of any responsibility, leaving my friend to recover the money directly from the buyer (who had in the meantime received the guitar well within the stated delivery time of three to five working days).

So, bearing in mind that my friend's experience is proof that PayPal refunding money without question is not an isolated incident and taking into account PayPal's zero tolerance to counterfeit goods, which was publicly stated in their response to the violin-smashing case (and in their terms and conditions when you open a trading account with them), we can now return to the fake guitars article from last month's mag.

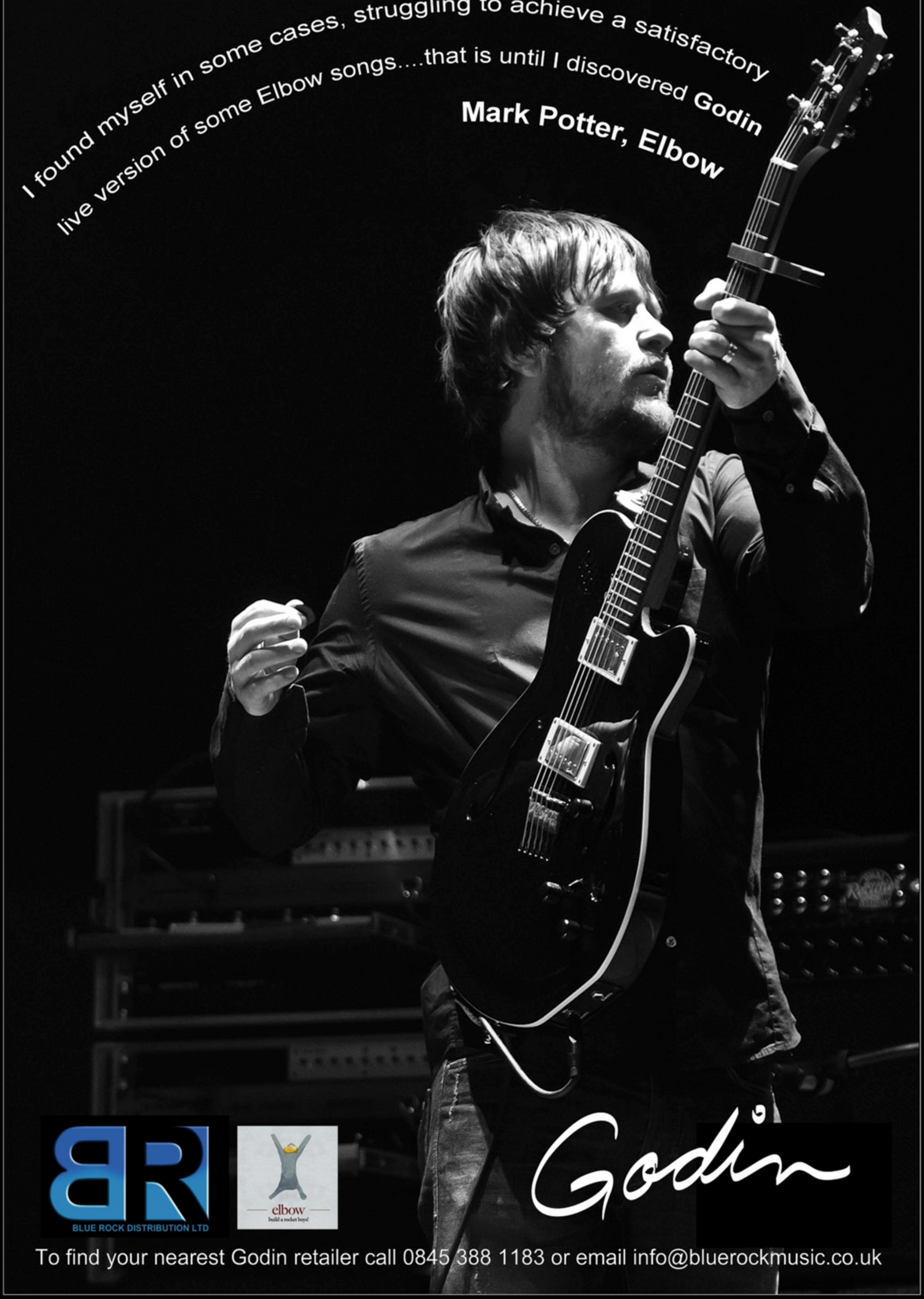
All the websites mentioned in that article accept PayPal. If, therefore, the 'guitar blogs are alive with horror stories' and these sites are, indeed, passing off copies as genuine – which they are, as I'm currently looking at an ESP Kirk Hammett 'Ouija' guitar with ESP logo and Kirk's signature on the headstock for the unlikely price of $230 – then some of the 'unsuspecting victims' will have no need to despair. There is no reason to wonder if your delinquent supplier is safely beyond reach, being located on the far side of the globe, no need to try to resort to impotent international copyright laws that our Far Eastern chums just ignore anyway; your very good friends at PayPal are happy to make things right, your money has not been wasted, and full recompense is only a complaint away. These are, after all, the rules that PayPal are insisting on playing by themselves.

You may have to smash up the instrument to qualify for a refund, as our first example showed, but if it really is such a POS, who cares? I'm sure that many of us have harboured fantasies of playing at Pete Townshend anyway, so surely you win both ways.

Adi Vines has worked with Radiohead, the Sex Pistols, the Darkness, Razorlight and others. See www.xselectronics.co.uk

I found myself in some cases, struggling to achieve a satisfactory live version of some Elbow songs....that is until I discovered **Godin**

Mark Potter, Elbow



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Photography by ellisimagery.co.uk

Album reviews

Otis Taylor
CONTRABAND
TelArc

Judging by the body-swallowing sheepskin and chunky chain, Taylor plans to take his trance blues to a new level with Contraband. With the help of Ron Miles' cornet, Chuck Campbell's faultless pedal steel and some great talents,

Taylor weaves more of his inimitable musical sorcery, creating unpredictable atmospheres aplenty with his brand of hypnotic blues.

Lance Lopez
HANDMADE MUSIC
String Commander

Texas has always been a flourishing breeding ground for blues-rock finesse, and Lopez owns that landscape. Where many would lose their balance, this album manages to nonchalantly negotiate the line between surly grit and

measured clarity. With Lopez's talent on the fingerboard and producer legendary Jim Gaines behind the desk this was always going to be a winner. Staggering stuff.

Jon Amor Blues Group
JON AMOR BLUES GROUP
Six Six

A mountain of an album from the man who once fronted UK bluesers the Hoax. Two short weeks recording at a farm on the south-west coast has resulted in a sound so totally focussed yet so loose and so damn vibey we'd square up to Mr T to see

'em live. Opener *Holy Water* comes with a haunting kick, *Juggernaut* holds a mighty groove and the simply epic rock'n'roll of *The Underdogs* sets this album on fire.

Grainne Duffy
TEST OF TIME
GD Records

Grainne Duffy earned her wings with her debut *Out Of The Dark* and proved herself as a soulful Irish songstress of the highest order with an equally deft touch on the six-string. Her follow-up furthers that reputation. With a nod to her Celtic roots, this

collection takes in the easy-going facets of rock, blues and country and stirs it all together for one seriously flavoursome dish... and let's not forget that sultry voice.

Chuck Loeb
PLAIN 'N' SIMPLE
C.A.R.E.

Loeb steps out of incredible contempo-jazz quartet Fourplay to indulge his love of soulful '60s and '70s fare. While the title reflects the stripped-down nature of this sensuous, wonderfully-crafted set, it by no means does

justice to the untouchable fretwork Loeb lays down here. Add top musicianship and gorgeous vocals from his wife and daughter, and you're in lush surroundings.

Barry Adamson
I WILL SET YOU FREE
Central Control

Adamson's CV is exemplary. Bassist for Magazine and Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, scores written for David Lynch, Danny Boyle and Oliver Stone amongst many others, a Mercury Music Award nomination for his solo work... such is his skill and

experience that this LP really might actually set you free. There's skewed rock, cinematic panoramas and pop sensibility aplenty. An original and fantastic fusion.

SNAP JUDGEMENTS

Dodgy
STAND UPRIGHT IN A COOL PLACE
Strike Back
11 years after their last album, Dodgy are back with a harmonious offering and lyrics upfront. Mellow, with a distinctly retro edge

Paul J Riley
ALBA PLACE
Wurly
With the personal, softly-spoken patter and careless timbre of these songs, Riley creates an cosy, dreamy landscape that'll have you swaying to sleep

Philipp Fankhauser
TRY MY LOVE
Membran
Switzerland's top bluesman presents an elegant collection from stage and studio that resonates with warmth and humanity

Mark Lanegan Band
BLUES FUNERAL
4AD
Lanegan's brooding blues creates a stark modern take on delta themes complete with sparse, eerie guitar and a hypnotic appeal

The Michael Landau Group
ORGANIC INSTRUMENTALS
Provogue
Top sessionman and purveyor of beautifully crafted melodic phrases beguiles on 10 outings into picking perfection

Rusty Anderson
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN
Hypertension
Paul McCartney's sideman has a similar way with a melody to his boss. This contains all the best widescreen AOR bits from his last two albums

Learning to fly

With supergroups Black Country Communion and Chickenfoot both going great guns, another is set to join the party. Flying Colors are made up of ex-Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy, Spocks Beard's Neal Morse (keyboards), Casey McPherson (lead vocal, guitar), Dave LaRue (bass) and Steve Morse (guitar). Of course we all know Morse best as the ex-Dixie Dregs and now Deep Purple six-stringer, but this project promises to meld folk, prog, pop and metal all into one huge pot. The eponymous debut album will be with us soon; see www.flyingcolorsmusic.com for details.

IOMMI KEEPS RIFFING

Tony Iommi may have been diagnosed as suffering from the early stages of lymphoma cancer, but he's not taking it sitting down. He's written the music for two new songs for the re-booted Black Sabbath since his diagnosis; bassist Geezer Butler has tweeted to say Tony's given the rest of the band 'a kick up the backside' and that we can expect a brand-new Sabbath album as promised. The Iron Man, it seems, will not be bowed.

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PLAY LIKE Brian May

We can't give you the hair, we can't give you the guitar, but we can open the lid on how to play like Brian May in this seven-part special, designed to be tackled one day at a time. **Douglas Noble** is your guide to a world of soaring rock

Welcome to what we hope is a feast for any guitar-playing Queen fan – an investigation into the nuts and bolts of the most excellent style of Queen's very own Brian May, split into seven sections, one for each day of what should prove to be a very fruitful week. Learning from Brian May requires open ears and experience; you can't develop all these skills completely in a week but you've got to start somewhere, and this day-by-day plan should give you the chance to study some of the main aspects of the man's considerable array of techniques.

Brian May, much like George Harrison with the Beatles, displayed an uncanny ability to come up the right guitar part for the right song. There's the pastiche rock'n'roll solo in *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*, the funky rhythm guitar in *Another One Bites The Dust*, the solo in *I Think I'm Going Mad* that sounds, well, deranged – and we'll look at that very solo on day 3 of this month's feature. We've added some YouTube references to help you see how May does it, although not of them are ideal, as much live Queen footage naturally focuses on flamboyant frontman Freddie Mercury rather than Brian May's finger positions.

May's equipment is an integral part of his style. His main guitar is his 'homemade' Red Special guitar, played through a treble booster designed and built by Queen bassist John Deacon and plugged into Vox amps. As if the guitar and custom treble booster were not idiosyncratic enough, May eschewed a conventional flexible plastic pick and used a pre-decimal sixpence instead. Fortunately, it's not necessary to have access to his gear in order to learn from his playing and emulate some of his traits. Dive in – and enjoy!

Day 1 SLASH CHORDS WITH OPEN STRINGS

30 MINUTES

The first thing we're going to tackle is Brian May's frequent use of 'slash chords' . Slash chords – which are not complicated to grasp in their simplest forms – are nothing to do with the chap with the funny hat who used to play in Guns N'Roses, but chords in which the lowest note is not the note that gives the chord its letter name.

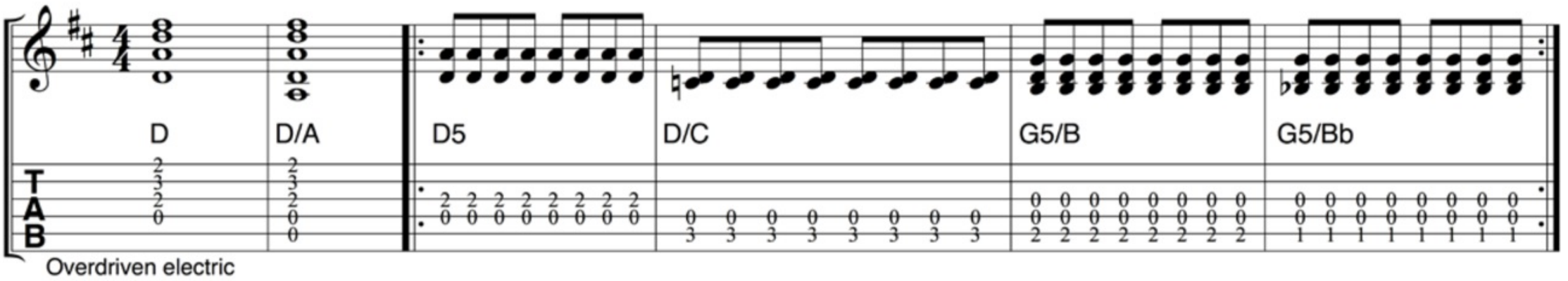
But first of all, a brief description or recap of chord diagrams and tablature. Chord diagrams normally show the open strings of the guitar plus the first three or so frets. They are simply a 'snapshot' of the bottom of the fretboard, with indications where to play the strings and numbers to tell you which fingers to use to hold down the strings. Simple! So in the D chord diagram, put your first finger on the third string, second fret; your third finger on the second, string third fret; and the second finger on the top string, second fret. The 'o' above the fourth string means play this string open, and the 'x's above strings six and five mean you should not play these strings.

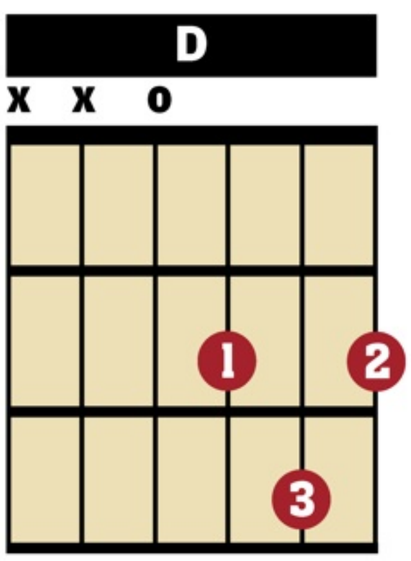
The musical examples are shown here in tablature only. Just to recap, we've got six lines here that represent the six strings of the guitar. The bottom line of the tab (that is, closest to the bottom of the page) is the bottom or thickest string of the guitar, and the top line of the tab (closest to the top of the page) is the top string. So, from lowest line to top line, representing bottom string to top, a D chord written in tab omits the bottom two lines, then the numbers read '0' (meaning an open string), '2' (meaning second fret), '3' (you've probably got the idea!) and '2'. The great advantage of tablature is that is takes around two minutes to understand, whereas the same information in music notation may take two weeks – or longer! The disadvantage in its basic form is that it does not reveal the rhythm of the music, so the rhythm has to be simple or already known to the player.

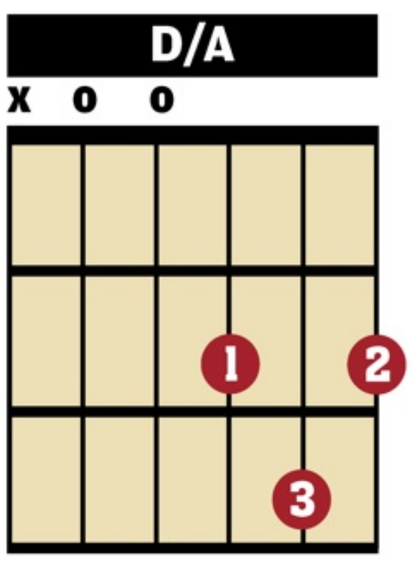
Slash chords are nothing to do with the chap in Guns N'Roses, but chords in which the lowest note doesn't give the chord its name

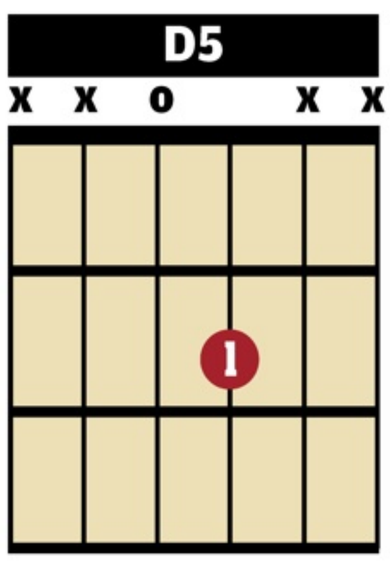
Returning to slash chords, strum the basic open D chord, shown here in the chord diagram and in the tab. Now, play the lowest note in the chord... the open fourth string, which is D. This is the note that the chord is built upon, so this note is played at the bottom of it. Now, strum the same chord again, but include the open fifth string, A. Now, because it's a D chord with A at the bottom, this chord is called D/A, meaning a D chord played over an A note.

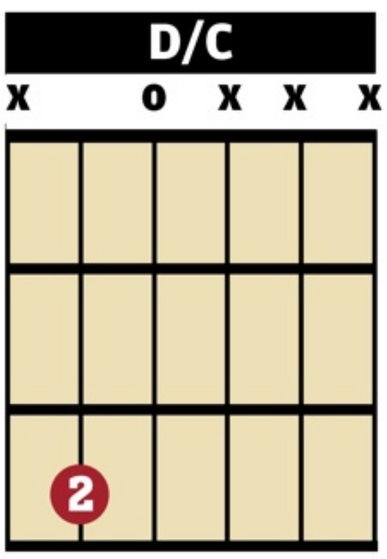
So, with explanations over, let's rock. May uses these D5, D/C, G5/B and G5/Bb chords shown in the diagrams and tab at the start of *Now I'm Here* in a simple 'chugging' rhythm, as represented in the exercise. There's a YouTube video of the band playing the song live at Wembley in 1986 at http://tinyurl.com/cxzkf2 which should prove useful, though in this live version May chooses to slightly embellish this part to create a fuller sound.

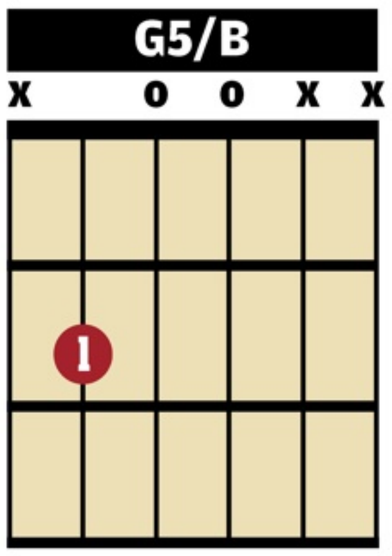


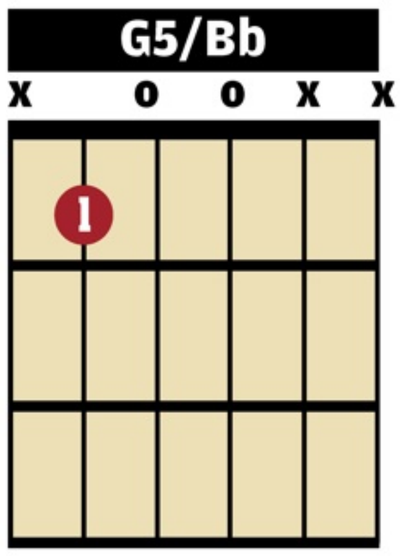












Day 2 MOVABLE SLASH CHORDS

30 MINUTES

The slash chords used in the *Now I'm Here*-style riff from Day 1 all used open strings plus one fretted note, just to get the week off to an easy-ish start. Now we've got some chords that use fretted notes only, meaning they can be played anywhere on the fretboard, and today we're going to see how they apply to three different Queen songs.

Below you'll first see the basic two-note power chord shape for D5 on strings five and four, using fingers one and four at frets five and seven respectively. Shift the first finger down a fret, and you've got A/C#. If you move this shape down two frets you've got G/B, and if you take D5 down two frets you've got C5 – so no need for chord diagrams for these two.

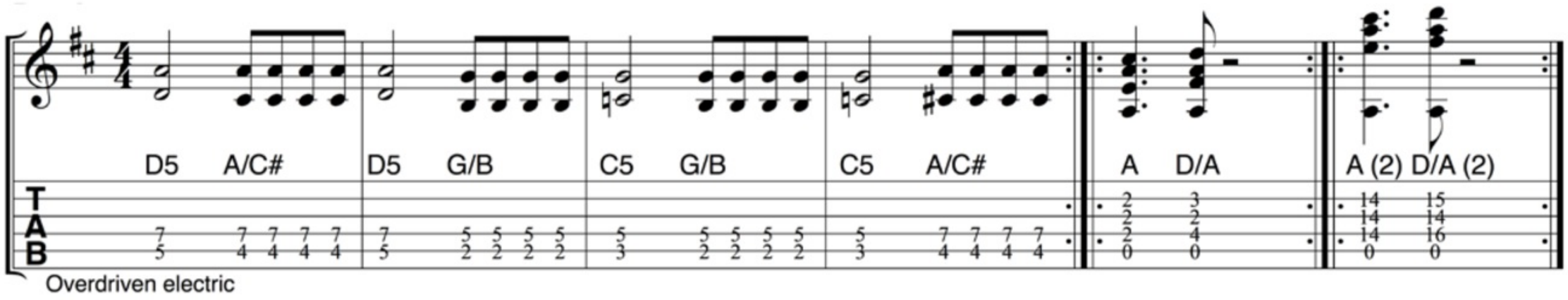
The first four bars are similar to the main guitar riff of *One Vision*. Notice how this progression uses 'common tones' – that is, notes shared between consecutive chords. D5 and A/C# share the A note on the fourth string, seventh fret, and G/B and C5 share the G note on the fourth string, fifth fret.

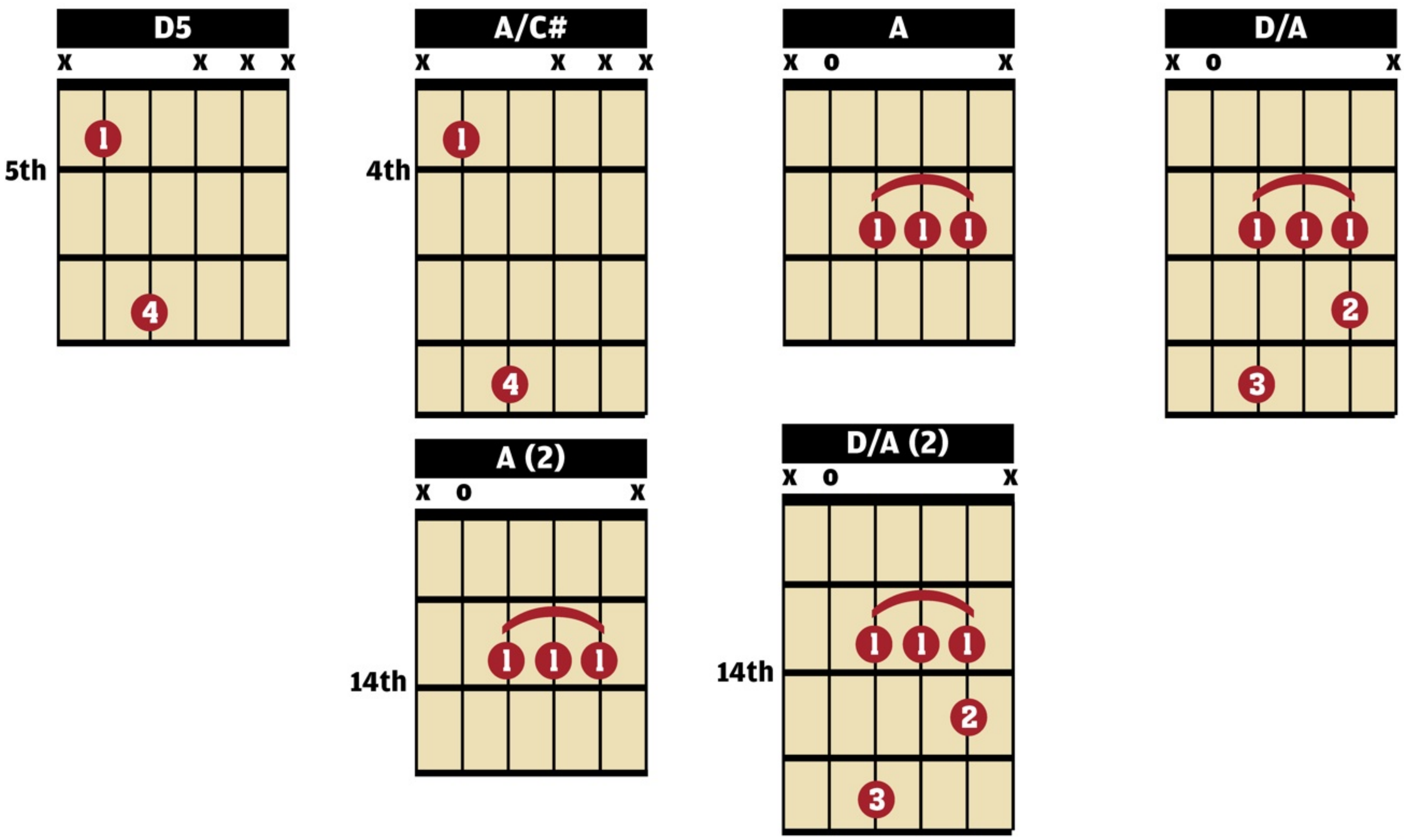
Then, notice how the progression from A/C# to D5 and from G/B to C5 both use 'voice leading' – to put it another way, the lowest note is moved up by one fret. This use of common tones and voice leading give the progression a very tight, cohesive, smooth sound. The YouTube video of a gig in 1986 in Budapest at http://tinyurl.com/7nlpvh8 shows May playing this song live.

Next, we've got a basic open A fingered with the first finger lying flat across strings four, three and two at the second fret. Then, add finger two on string two at the third fret and finger three on the fourth string at the fourth fret and we've got D/A – a D chord (but not the basic open D chord!) played over an A bass note. Yes, both these chords use open A at the bottom... but that doesn't stop May moving them! Shift these two shapes up by an octave or 12 frets and you've got A (2) and D/A (2).

These slash chords use fretted notes only, and we're going to see how they can be applied to three different Queen songs

Bar five of the exercise uses A and D/A and is reminiscent of the main riff of *Hammer To Fall*, which can be seen in a classic clip of Queen's performance at Live Aid in 1985 at http://tinyurl.com/4x7dlb (at least, once Freddie Mercury has finally finished winding up the crowd). As with the *One Vision* riff, May makes great use of common tones here. Shift these shapes up 12 frets for bar six to produce A (2) and A/D (2) and you've got the basis of the high register *We Will Rock You* part heard first at 1:38, or seen at 0:56 of the live YouTube found at http://tinyurl.com/2adh6e. May also uses these shapes in *A Kind of Magic* at the 2:06 point on the record, or you can hear it at 2:18 of http://tinyurl.com/7yxjbff. Move the video to the 4.39 mark and you'll hear it again, but a bit more clearly this time.





Day 3 PLAYING FOR THE SONG — 20 MINUTES

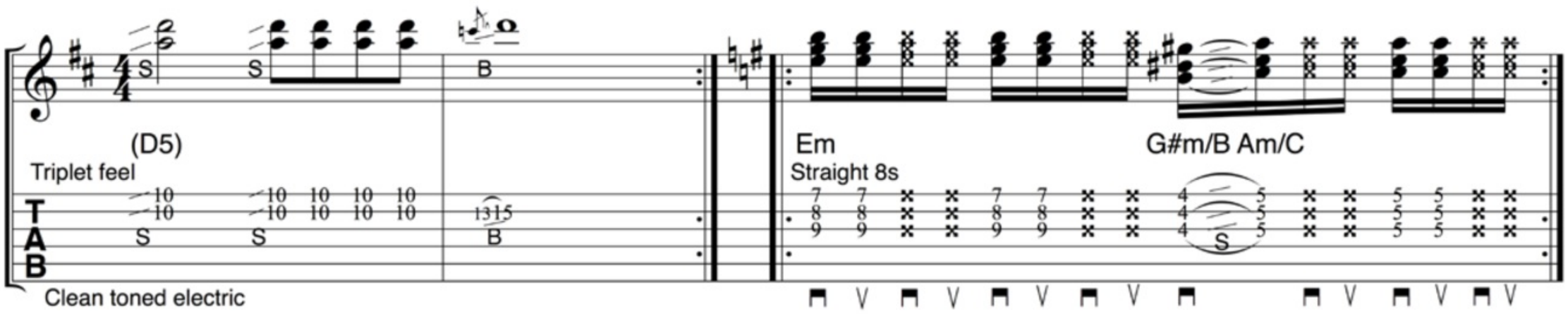
Brian May has always cut his cloth to suit the song he is playing for, and here's a couple of licks that reflect this. May's solo in *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* – a Freddie Mercury-penned song – starts with rock'n'roll staple of double stops on the top two strings, similar to the first two bars of the exercise, as heard at 1:19 and seen at 2:02 of another clip from the Live Aid show, captured on YouTube at http://tinyurl.com/bzvtvw.

This solo also illustrates May's knack for getting the right sound for the right song. Normally you'd expect him to play his trademark 'Red Special' through Vox amps, but not this time: he chose this moment to employ a Mesa/Boogie amp, and used a different guitar. 'I was forced to do the *Crazy Little Thing* solo on a Telecaster,' he explained. 'That was good, because it's a pastiche of a rock'n'roll solo and it made me play like Steve Cropper. I always think it's best to approach the guitar solo as another part of the song, not just an echo of the melody,' he added. 'It's not about just blazing away as fast as you can, but about bringing new elements in.' May occasionally works solos out in his head before he plays them, an approach used for *Killer Queen* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

May uses the same approach when playing rhythm. In the funk-based *Another One Bites The Dust*, penned by bassist John Deacon, May provides a funky semiquaver-based rhythm guitar part similar to the one in bar three, below. It's got the main funk trait of semiquaver-based strumming, using slides of one fret into a chord and deadened strings. No need for chord diagrams for these three-note chords. The deadened strings are marked with 'x's in the tab; play with alternate strumming, as shown in the picking directions. The square sign with the 'missing bottom' is a down stroke with the plectrum, and the 'V' sign is an up stroke with the plectrum. Notice how the slide in the middle of the bar does not alter the strict alternate strumming, and ought to be marked by a silent upstroke or one that misses the strings so that the next strike can be a down stroke. May first plays this part at 1:06 and at 0:59 on YouTube at http://tinyurl.com/d67kd7 – you'll catch a fleeting glimpse of May's fretboard work at 1:06!

May's guitar parts are not always as 'literal' or as directly lifted from specific genres as this. The solo in *I'm Going Slightly Mad* starting at 2:30 reflects the disturbed, schizophrenic, neurotic nature of the lyrics in its use of different guitars carrying the solo with different sounds, playing in different registers from low down the fretboard to high up the fretboard, and by using a slide to create a disconcerting, unnerving effect in that the listener can't really predict which note May is going to stop at or slide to.

So what do we draw from this? The importance of playing for the song, rather than yourself, both in terms of licks and sound... and to do this, you need to listen to a wide range of music and develop a broad musical vocabulary.



Day 4 PENTATONIC MAJOR LICKS — 20 MINUTES

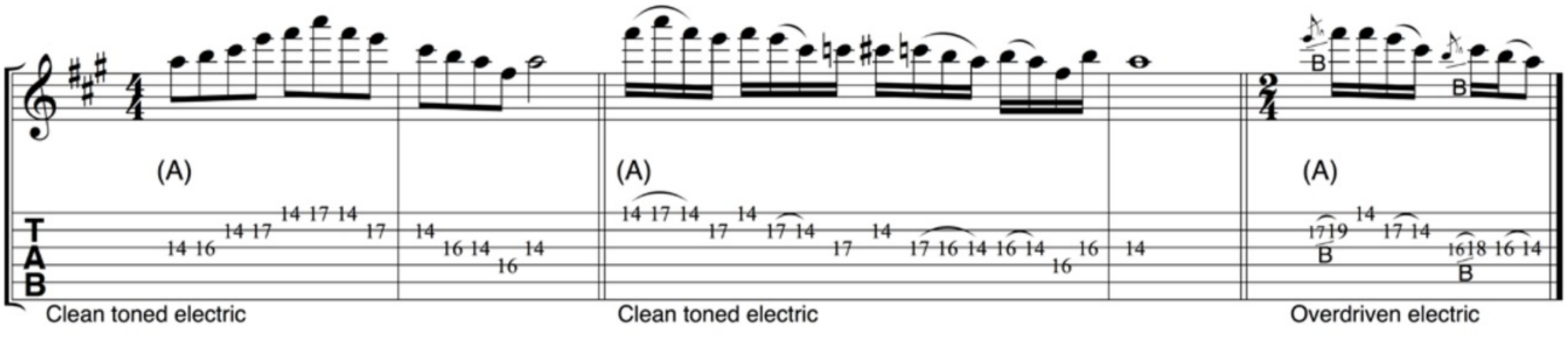
May's soloing tends to be melodic-based rather than lick-based like so many other rock guitarists, although occasionally he can be heard using standard stock licks, and we're going to look at four examples today.

The two licks here both use the A pentatonic major scale (A B C# E F# A), shown here in the first two bars ending with F# below the tonic note then returning to the tonic note. The bracketed A chords reflect the fact that all of this exercise comes from the A pentatonic major scale and thus would most commonly be used over an A chord, although they obviously work over other chords depending on context.

Bars three and four are similar to a pentatonic major lick found in *A Kind of Magic*; you'll find it at 2:26 on the record and at 2:36 on YouTube at http://tinyurl.com/7yxjbff. They're based on the A pentatonic major scale (A B C# E F# A), but notice how May adds the minor third degree of the scale – C natural on the third string, 17th fret – and uses it in conjunction with the major third degree of the scale... C# on the second string, 14th fret. Notice how the inclusion of this note means the first 10 notes are all at either the 14th or 17th frets, giving a rather pleasing fretboard symmetry to the phrase. The bracketed A chord reflects the fact that this lick comes from the A pentatonic major scale and therefore would most commonly be used over an A chord.

Brian May's soloing tends to be melodic-based rather than lick-based like many other rock guitarists, but he does use stock licks

The fifth bar shows a similar but shorter stock lick from *We Will Rock You* at 1:47, again using the A pentatonic major scale, but with a couple of extra bends thrown in. Live, May improvises a variation on this lick at 1:05 of http://tinyurl.com/2adh6e on YouTube.



Day 5 DELAY — 30 MINUTES

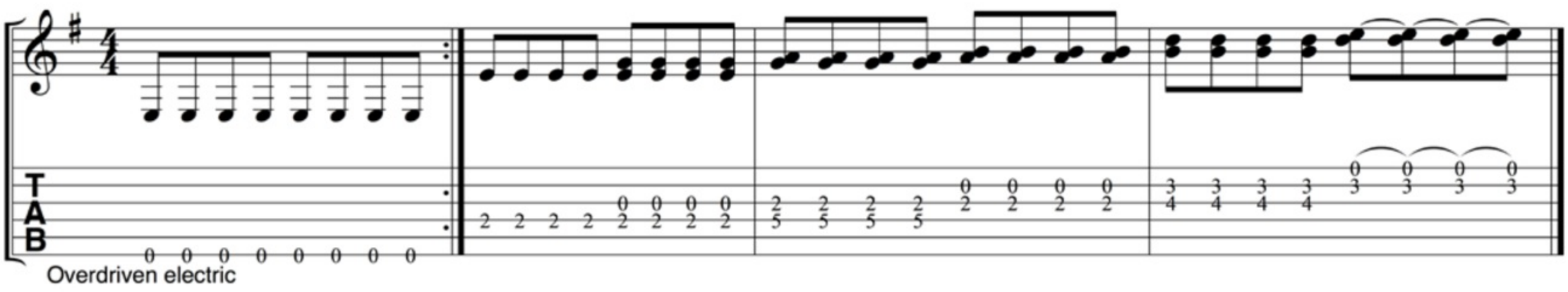
Brian May makes extensive use of delay in the solo from *Brighton Rock*, both in the original version on *Sheer Heart Attack* and in live performances. The exercise shows the end result of a May-type phrase without using delay... so you're going to be playing both parts at the same time.

This is basically an ascending E pentatonic minor scale; play through it, keeping a steady pulse and constant note values. Now, take a closer look at the tab: in each bar, the lower fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth notes are the same as the first, second, third and fourth notes, so the idea now is to create notes five to eight with the delay effect.

Let's say the speed of the music is 120 bpm, or 120 beats a minute – that's two beats every second. We want the notes to repeat two beats or one second later, so the delay time needs to be set at 1 second, or 1000 milliseconds as the delay unit might call it. Use the first bar to judge that you've got the delay time and your sense of rhythm correct – you're aiming to play only the first four bottom Es, then have them repeated immediately as the second lot of bottom Es, with no interruption and no overlap so the effect is constant quavers. Use this bar to hone the technique and develop the rhythmic coordination between the struck notes and the delay. May can be heard 'pacing himself' rather like this in the studio version of *Brighton Rock* from *Sheer Heart Attack* at 3:20 and in a live version from 1975 at YouTube at http://tinyurl.com/24xac7v at 2:44.

The notes here are difficult to play – but it's a matter of working with your equipment to get the end result.

Once you've got this, proceed onto the rest of the exercise. Now, with the delay up and running you're going to be playing only the upper note of each pair of notes in the tablature; the delay will provide the lower notes. The lower note in bar three at the fourth string, fifth fret is not written the same as the notes at the end of the previous bar, but remember these notes are the same in pitch. It's the same at the end of bar three going into bar four. The curved lines joining the open top strings at the end of the fourth bar are ties which join the notes together; strike the note once and let it ring on.



Day 6 HARMONY — 30 MINUTES

Here's a crash course in harmony! Melodic harmony is about taking one melodic part – whether it's a vocal part or played on an instrument – and coming up with another part that complements it.

The first bar shows a one-octave C major scale at the bottom of the fretboard. The second bar shows the C major scale starting on the third note, E, on the fourth string, second fret and continuing one octave higher to E. Bar three shows the C major scale starting on the fifth note of the scale, the open G third string, and continuing one octave higher. Using these three patterns you can form the most common harmonies, but you're going to have to either have access to a recording device or rope a mate in to play one of the parts.

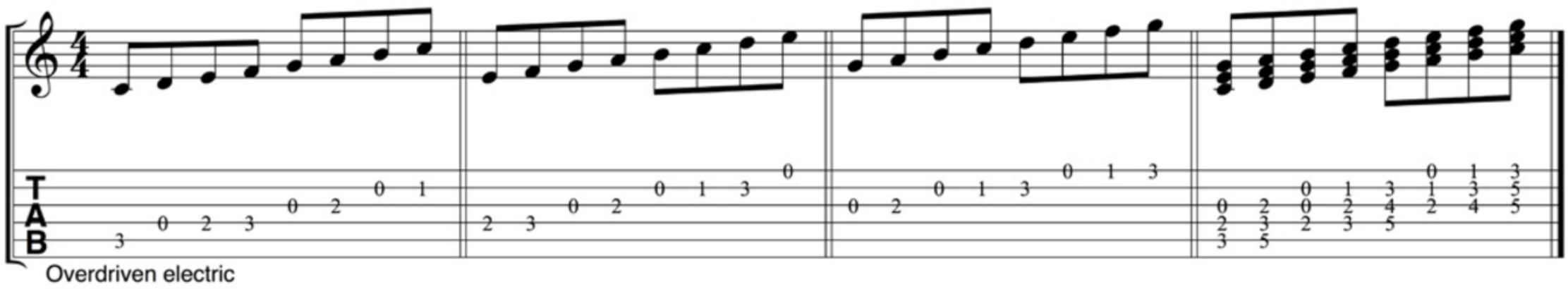
So, one way or another, play bars one and two together. This creates a harmony of parallel diatonic thirds. This may sound complicated, but 'parallel' simply means the upper part directly mirrors the lower part, and 'diatonic' means the upper part sticks to the same notes as the lower part. Harmonising in thirds gives a 'sweet' sound.

Next, play bars one and bar three together, and you will create a harmony of parallel diatonic fifths. A harmony of fifths gives a 'bare' sound compared with the sweet sound of thirds. By now, you're hopefully becoming aware of the possibilities. A harmony can start on any note of the scale – although some are more usable than others! A harmony part need not run slavishly parallel to the original part, nor does it need to start above the original part; it can be below as well.

The recording studio gives Brian May limitless possibilities for producing harmonies. His take on *God Save The Queen* starts with four guitars playing in harmony for the first two bars – then a fifth part enters! Listen very closely to the first two bars and see if you can pick out each one. Queen would finish live performances by playing the album version of this track.

When playing songs with overdubbed harmonies live, May had to rely on playing either the most important part, or using his Echoplex delay to simulate two or more guitars. Bar four shows all three bars played together, arranged in the tab so that all three parts can be played simultaneously. This doesn't have the same effect as three guitars playing the single note parts separately, so ideally overdub two of the parts and play the third part live, or rope in two friends.

Incidentally, May can occasionally be heard running up the major scale, just like in bar one of this exercise – for example in *A Kind Of Magic* at 3:44 – live, May tended to play a more conventional solo as seen and heard from a 1986 live show at http://tinyurl.com/7yxjbff.

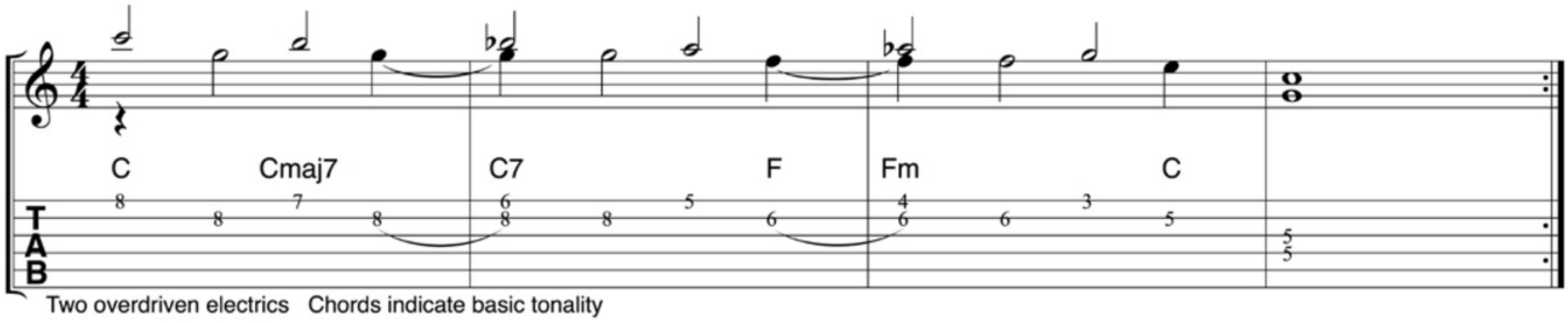
A similar ascending three-part scalar passage to that in bar four can be heard in *A Kind Of Magic* at 3:58. A fill in three parts to the *Killer Queen* solo can be heard at 1:34. There's another three-part fill in *Good Old Fashioned Lover Boy* at 1:53, again as an accompaniment to the guitar solo. Yet another three-part fill can be heard in *A Kind Of Magic* at 1:48, complementing the 'I'm hearing secret harmonies' vocal. These elements of songs were designed for the studio only, and were not possible to play in live performance without backing tapes.

Day 7 BELLS-STYLE HARMONY

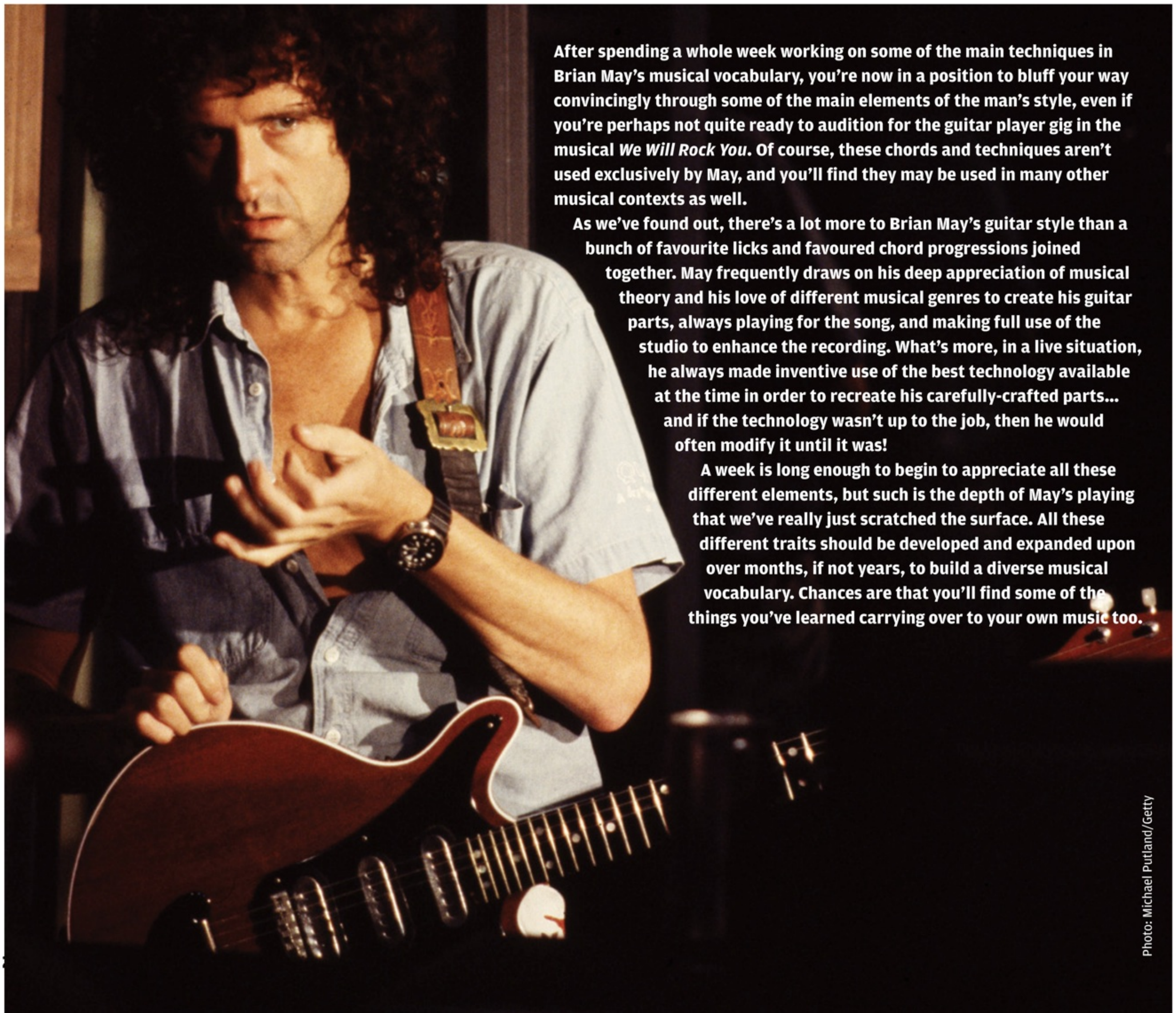
20 MINUTES

May once spoke to *Guitar & Bass* about the solo in *Killer Queen*. 'When it gets to the main solo, it starts off as a single guitar then the other guitar parts come in – but not in parallel or in an obvious harmony, but in "bells" as we called it,' he revealed. 'I got that idea from listening to jazz bands such as the Temperance Seven... building up chords in arpeggios. We used this technique on voices as well. In *Killer Queen* each part has its own melody, but they also interact together.'

This 'bells' technique can be heard starting at 1:48, and is again restricted to the studio recording. This final exercise demonstrates this technique – although it could be played on one guitar, you won't get the same effect that May gets with overdubbing so you're best off recording one of the parts or persuading a guitar-playing mate to join you once again.

The upper guitar part is written on the top line and is thus played on the top string, apart from the final bar when it jumps to string three. The lower guitar part is on string two, apart from the final bar when it jumps to string four. The implied chord progression is written above the tab – C, Cmaj7, C7, F, Fm, C. Basically, this means that the two note 'bell' part here is outlining this chord progression, since there are only two parts and a conventional chord consists of three or four different notes. They key to playing this correctly is to make sure the notes are all given two beats, apart from the second last note in the lower part which just gets one beat so that the two parts can end simultaneously. Also, make sure that the two parts are syncopated or staggered by one beat all the time, apart from at the end. This makes it sound like real 'bells'; church bells will overlap notes in a way that doesn't often happen on the guitar since consecutive notes are often played on the same string, thus necessarily cutting off the previous note, and when you go to a new string you normally lift your fingers from the previous string.





After spending a whole week working on some of the main techniques in Brian May's musical vocabulary, you're now in a position to bluff your way convincingly through some of the main elements of the man's style, even if you're perhaps not quite ready to audition for the guitar player gig in the musical *We Will Rock You*. Of course, these chords and techniques aren't used exclusively by May, and you'll find they may be used in many other musical contexts as well.

As we've found out, there's a lot more to Brian May's guitar style than a bunch of favourite licks and favoured chord progressions joined together. May frequently draws on his deep appreciation of musical theory and his love of different musical genres to create his guitar parts, always playing for the song, and making full use of the studio to enhance the recording. What's more, in a live situation, he always made inventive use of the best technology available at the time in order to recreate his carefully-crafted parts... and if the technology wasn't up to the job, then he would often modify it until it was!

A week is long enough to begin to appreciate all these different elements, but such is the depth of May's playing that we've really just scratched the surface. All these different traits should be developed and expanded upon over months, if not years, to build a diverse musical vocabulary. Chances are that you'll find some of the things you've learned carrying over to your own music too.

Photo: Michael Putland/Getty

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SOFA
So Good

Jack Bruce, bassist extraordinaire, has a new jazz fusion supergroup on the boil plus a fabulous big blues band. Slowing down? No chance. Interview by **David Gallant**

Gear

Basses

Current: Warwick Rio rosewood Thumb Bass with Hartke or Warwick Jonas Hellborg amps. Early '60s unnamed blond plywood upright bass with a Grampian amp, followed by Fender six-string bass, Fender fretless bass and a Danelectro. C19th flatback German upright bass. Cream gear: Gibson EB-3 with Marshall 50W and 100W stacks

In the pantheon of electric bass players, Jack Bruce is an almost iconic figurehead. Inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame on the same night as Bootsy Collins, he recently had the honour of being the third recipient of the prestigious International Bassist Award. 'I don't give a lot of thought to it,' he says with disarming modesty. 'It's nice, but in the end they're just things. A lot of it is being given these awards for still being alive.' Which is oddly relevant, as Bruce has just come out on the right side of a life-threatening liver transplant.

Growing up in a flat in Glasgow with a mother who sang Scottish folk songs and a jazz piano playing father – 'he had a dubious left hand, but swung like the clappers' – Bruce took up the cello at an early age and eventually gained a scholarship to study classical cello at the Royal Scottish Academy for Music and *DraaMaa* (he makes a play on the AA's). 'But I didn't go for long,' he counters, 'and now they've given me an honorary doctorate! So it shows you that what you should really do is go for a few months, then drop out. I recommend that to every student.'

Jack Bruce and his Big Blues Band, with Tony Remy on guitar

Photo: Marek Hoffman

So what made him take up the bass, and who and what were his early influences? 'I played bass in order to supplement my income and meet girls,' comes the candid reply. 'Charles Mingus was my biggest influence, because he was also a composer, which is what I do. As far as electric bass players go... not so much. Jaco was very good. When I was starting out, it was the jazz string bass players like Oscar Pettiford and Ray Brown who influenced me. I once jokingly made the comment that Bach was a major influence, but actually I was being semi-serious. Classical music and classical composers have always had a great effect.'

Bruce's first upright bass was a plywood one. 'I bought her from McCormacks Music in Glasgow – she was quite fashionable at the time.' After playing in jazz bands in Glasgow and American airforce bases in Italy, Bruce eventually landed in London.

'I used to go down to Archer Street, next to the Windmill Theatre, which was a famous hangout for musicians on a Monday lunchtime to get work, and that's where I picked up my first London gig with

the seminal and famous band led by Alexis Korner. Those were interesting times,' comments Bruce. 'In the beginning with Alexis, both he and I went into the same amp. I used to just stick a microphone in the tailpiece of the bass, wrapped up in a duster.'

Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated effectively morphed into the Graham Bond Organisation (without Alexis) with Bond on Hammond organ, Dick Heckstall-Smith on tenor sax and the rhythm section of drummer Ginger Baker (who had also played with Korner) and Bruce on bass. The GBO was the first band where Bruce played electric bass – a six-string Fender Bass VI. Bands were constantly in flux in the mid-'60s, and it wasn't long before Bruce and Baker were on the move again to form what is now considered to be the first of the great supergroups, Cream.

> *'I like the four-string bass. It's the classic. I feel the limitations are important'*

Any partnership has its ups and downs, but it was an open secret that theirs was a rocky relationship. 'It was much more than that,' counters Bruce. 'A lot of times it was like life-threatening. But the nice thing is that we're really friendly now.'

Bruce was the songwriter in the band. 'I wrote the melody and all that to *Sunshine Of Your Love, White Room, I Feel Free* and a couple of others, and Pete Brown wrote the lyrics.' Which is his favourite album? 'They reckon that the classic Cream album is *Disraeli Gears*, and who am I to disagree? It's such a long time ago.'

Between the GBO and Cream, Bruce dropped the Fender Bass VI in favour of the Gibson EB-3. 'I like the four-string – it's the classic instrument and I feel that the limitations are important. The EB-3 has a through-body neck which is great for sustain and I liked the ➔

And another thing...

Spectrum Road, Bruce's new band, is a jazz-rooted Tony Williams Lifetime tribute band featuring John Medeski on piano, ex-Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid and the amazing Cindy Blackman-Santana on drums. They will release their first album, *Spectrum Road*, on Palmetto Records in May 2012

Photo: Marek Hoffman

Listen up

CREAM
Disraeli Gears
(1967)
The brilliant Cream album, recorded at Atlantic studios in NY, and released on the Reaction label with one of the all-time great psychedelic artwork sleeves

JACK BRUCE
Seven Moons Live
(2009)
Recorded live in Nijmegen, Holland and released on Ruf records with Robin Trower on guitar and Gary Husband on drums. Features a wild *Sunshine Of Your Love* and new takes on *White Room* and *Politician*

Big Blues

Jack is playing 10 dates across the country with his Big Blues Band in March, and in the words of the man himself you can expect 'blues ancient and modern and sweet and sour rock'n'roll'. The tour starts on 20 March in Cambridge and winds up in Newcastle on the 31st. Go to www.jackbruce.com for full details or book at www.seetickets.com

short scale. I played it like a guitar with very light-gauge flatwound LaBella strings that I could bend.' Cream were one of the first groups to use a full Marshall backline: 'We really nicked that idea from the Who,' says Bruce. 'They were the first to use them. Actually I was never that keen on them, although I did have one that I liked a lot – a 50W. I think somebody nicked it.'

Bruce is happy to trawl the 'early years' memory bank. 'In the late 1960s while I was still with Cream I recorded a jazz acoustic album with John McLaughlin, Dick Heckstall-Smith and Jon Hiseman. It took about four days to record. I did that on an old full-size flatback 19th century German bass which I still have.' Does Bruce adapt his playing method when playing an acoustic upright bass? 'I don't consciously think I'm playing jazz, so I have to play in a certain way – it just comes naturally. Most of the sound comes out of my fingers. I'm not playing jazz... I'm playing Jack. But I'm lucky in that I can play in many different styles.'

After the Cream split, Bruce either 'sat in' or joined a number of bands including the influential jazz/fusion outfit Tony Williams' Lifetime, where he continued to use his EB-3. 'I started playing a fretless Warwick in the '70s. I was recording in Germany and went into a guitar shop and there was one there. I picked it up and liked it, so I bought it. Now I have a couple of beautiful basses that Warwick have made especially for me. My favourite bass is the Thumb Bass which is a special custom one – a real Rio rosewood bass, the only one. The wood was cut in the '60s, and you can no longer get it. It's the most wonderful bass I have ever played.'

This year Warwick are bringing out a Jack Bruce signature bass, appropriately named the Survivor. 'The Survivor is like the EB-3 with a through-body neck,' says Bruce, 'although it's a full scale rather than a short scale instrument.' Will he will be playing it in the future? 'I'm in love with my Rio rosewood bass – who knows?'

Bruce's current string choice is SIT. 'I use them because they stay in tune and you don't have to go through three or four sets before you find a good set.' He no longer uses Marshall amps: 'I don't really like the sound from the Celestion speakers they often use. For many years I've been using Hartke, who were the first company to start using aluminium in their speaker cones, which gave a much wider dynamic range. But that wasn't the sound I was looking for. Now they've moved on to combine aluminium and paper in their speakers, and of course they're now the biggest bass amplification manufacturer in the world.' More recently, Bruce has been experimenting with Jonas Hellborg amps which are manufactured by Warwick.

'Bass is just something I do. I should probably have given up years ago, but I didn't'

In March 2012 Jack Bruce once again takes to the road with his Big Blues Band for a short but intensive UK tour. 'It's an eight-piece band with a full brass section,' says Bruce. Once again, a disarming modesty sets in. 'I just play the bass [actually, with BBB he also plays piano]. I don't think about why I do it – it's just something I do.

'It's not something I try to work out why – I should have probably given up years ago, but I didn't, and I'm still doing it. I also sing, so I've got the top and the bottom... and that's kind of interesting.'

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Musical *youth*

Ex-Hoax hotshot guitarist Jon Amor has reinvigorated his whole approach by recruiting a keen new band to help drive his ferocious uptempo blues riffery home. Interview by **Michael Heatley**

They say that life begins at 40 – and, having recently hit that milestone age, Jon Amor can no longer be termed 'the future of British blues', or any of the other tags hung on him since his days with the legendary Hoax. Nevertheless, he's put a spring in his far from elderly step by recruiting a set of young musicians with a point to prove. Naming them the Jon Amor Blues Group, he's nailed his colours to the mast in more ways than one.

'A lot of people were surprised, but I said to the guys "we shouldn't be afraid of the B word". Certainly, in this country, people think of it as old man's music, depressing or boring. We decided it's not that. Some think it's setting ourselves up for a fall.

'We've had some people say it's not really a blues album, but I think it is. It's in the spirit of the blues, and it's warts and all. One of the inspirations was those Muddy Waters records of the '70s, like *Hard Again* – they're so lively and exciting. For me that's what blues should be: expressing yourself in an honest, open, raw and energetic way.'

> *'Blues should be expressing yourself in an honest, open, raw and energetic way'*

And what of Amor's fellow musicians? 'They've really thrown themselves into the album. Their energy and enthusiasm rubs off – my vigour for playing the guitar has come back. I went through a phase where I was doing a lot of acoustic gigs and writing folky music; I did miss cranking up the amp and ripping out a solo with a great band behind me. We're all keen to start writing again this year and make another album.'

This line-up has been together on and off, since about 2006, but the goalposts have moved significantly – hence the newly introduced 'Group' tag. 'It's always been a case of me calling the shots and telling them what to play. This project is different; I opened up the floor to songwriting and to their ideas for production and arrangements, so this is much more a joint venture.'

His guitar sparring partner is Dave Doherty who, with bassist brother Chris and drummer Simon Small, makes up the four-piece line-up. 'Dave takes a couple of solos live, and there are a couple on the record. What I didn't want with this band was to have twin-guitar duelling going on, but Dave does take the spotlight every now and then.'

Surprisingly, Jon is no longer wedded to the trusty Strat he's wielded his whole career. 'I wanted a different sound, and a different look as well, so I play an Epiphone Dot I picked up secondhand. It's got that hollow, barking kind of tone. There are a couple of songs I play the Strat on live, but I'm enjoying the change, using slightly thinner strings to get a slappier tone. It's changed the way I play, too: I do a lot more fingerpicking, and I'm playing a lot more percussively.'

While the album's official UK release is in March, the group have been performing all its songs since September, when it was released in Europe. The standout track for Jon is *Angel In A Black Dress*. 'Everything is live... the vocals were live. My throat was shot because I'd been doing a lot of singing by the ➔

Guitars

Guitar
Epiphone Dot, Fender Stratocaster

Amps
Fender Vibroverb – a 1993 reissue that's survived two car crashes and been used and abused over the years – in conjunction with a Fender Hotrod Deville, set quite bassy to give plenty of 'low-end grumble'

Effects
Ibanez Tube Screamer 'for a bit of boost', plus an occasional wah-wah. 'I'm not that into effects, really, I like it fairly pure these days'

The reformed Hoax in 2009

The Jon Amor Blues Group: Dave Doherty, Jon Amor, Chris Doherty, Simon Small

time it came to record it, but it gives it a real rough edge and a real energy – and the guitar solo is kind of crazy!'

Another favourite is *Repeat Offender*, which gets a good reaction live. 'It encapsulates what I set out to do with this band, which is to play blues-infused music with energy and a twist. And with good lyrical content; I was keen to write proper songs in the blues genre, and this is one I'm proud of.' He also spotlights the cover-worthy *Juggernaut*, 'a song I'd like someone to pick up.'

When *G&B* spoke to Jon exactly 10 years ago he wanted to get away from the shadow of former band the Hoax. Now his attitude towards the past has changed. 'Sometimes the Hoax was a bit of an albatross around my neck as it was all people wanted to talk about. Now I've made five albums and established myself as a songwriter and a musician, so I'm less uptight about talking about it. At the end of the day, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now if it wasn't for that band.

'It was fun to play with the guys again, and the crowds came out and really enjoyed it. I don't whether we'll do it again – I'm just having too much fun with the blues group.'

So where did the Hoax go right – and wrong? 'I think what we did right was to give British blues a kick up the arse. We were young and energetic, writing original material. Maybe if we'd toed the line a bit more with our record company we might have had more success. We were very strong-minded and stubborn, and I'm quite proud of that. But maybe if we'd done what they had said a bit more, we might all be rich!'

Amor considers the current UK blues market to be relatively healthy. 'I don't think it will ever go away. There's still quite a strong hardcore following. Social networking has helped as well, Facebook and Twitter; lots of blues communities have contributed to helping the scene stay healthy and keeping it afloat. It's certainly been worse than it is now.'

Having hit 40 in August, Jon is at ease with his 'senior citizen' status. 'At the moment, it's still a novelty,' he smiles. 'But 40 is still young in the blues world, and I'm surrounded by guys in the band that keep me feeling young. I have been referred to as a veteran already in some reports! I guess I should be happy; if you can stick around in this business for 20 years and still be doing it, then you can't be doing too much wrong.'

Will he be having as much fun in 20 years' time? 'God, I hope so! I've been through that period in my career where I was disillusioned and it felt like a job; just before I quit the Hoax I wasn't enjoying the music business at all. I've got to the stage in my career now where, if I do get pissed off with something, or I get tired on the road and I want to go home, I remind myself that I've got a great job and that it's supposed to be fun. It is fun, 99 per cent of the time – and I'm really enjoying myself at the moment.'

Listen up

THE HOAX
Humdinger (1998)
This third album, released on their own label, was the Hoax's masterwork, now available in an anniversary edition with video and extra tracks. Jon has no need to be diffident about the past judging by this barnstormer, which teams him with Jesse Davey

JON AMOR BLUES GROUP
Jon Amor Blues Group (2012)
Reflecting the greats as well as the Black Keys, this sets out Jon Amor's stall for the future. His young associates add their own thing,and the result is fresh and authentic, with dynamism to spare

And another thing...

Jon's dad traded in his beloved clarinet to help pay for his son's first serious electric guitar, a Fender Strat, in 1992. Part-time work at an off-licence mean the young man paid off the balance... eventually!

Heroes AND INFLUENCES

While Jon Amor cites T-Bone Walker, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Albert King and JJ Cale as current iPod favourites, he was initially inspired to pick up the guitar by Mark Knopfler. 'A lot of people chuckle at that, but he was the man that made me want to play guitar. I was absolutely Dire Straits nuts! *Money For Nothing* got me excited as a 13- or 14- year old, but it was their first two albums I really dug. They're very bluesy, so it was through Knopfler that I discovered JJ Cale and Eric Clapton – and that's when I decided I wanted to be a blues guitarist. Knopfler was my first guitar hero.'

He met Clapton when the Hoax were opening for Buddy Guy at the Shepherd's Bush Empire – and the next night was even better. 'We were lucky enough to be invited onstage with Buddy to jam with him. That was pretty amazing. I remember standing on stage, looking at him grinning at me and swapping licks with him, and thinking, "it doesn't get much better than this!"

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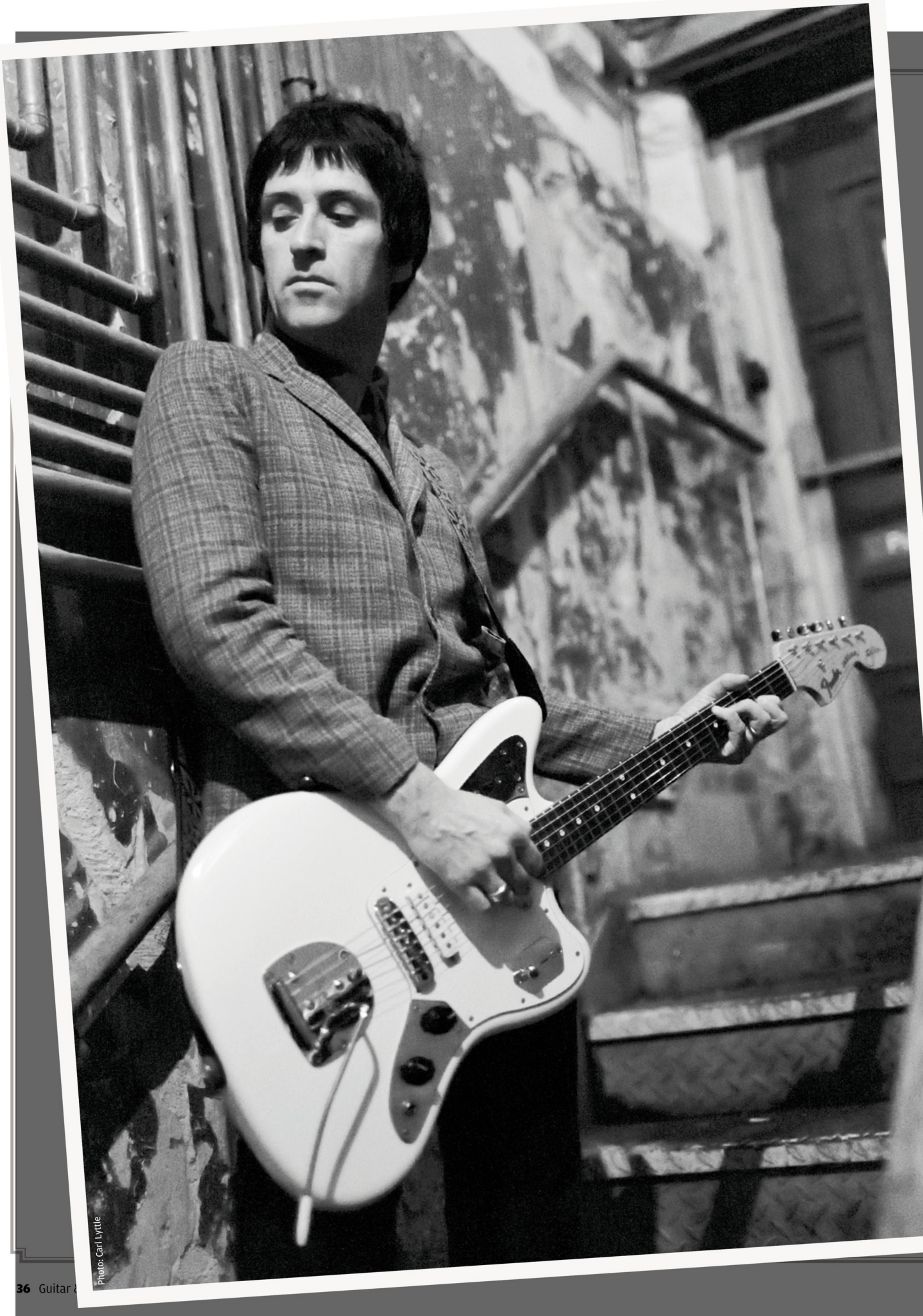

Photo: Carl Lyttle

Papa's got a *Brand New Jag*

The Fender Jaguar has always drawn independently-minded devotees, and Johnny Marr has spent years fine-tuning his new signature model to create a guitar that works even better than it looks. Interview: **Hayden Hewitt**

The sketchy approach isn't for Johnny Marr. Some big-name players, judging by their signature guitars, do little more than shuffle through a sheaf of paint swatches and order their favourite aftermarket pickups before rocking up at NAMM to pout sexily for the cameras then sitting back to watch the percentages roll in. Others, we know, go to endlessly painstaking trouble; David Gilmour was certainly one (as *G&B* found out in our feature on the Black Strat). But how many players would spend countless hundreds of hours playing ongoing prototypes on extended tours with different bands, taking work-in-progress instruments out to record whole album sessions, dreaming and tweaking and brainstorming until at long last the result was judged right for release?

Marr has done just that, and more, and the Mancunian legend sat down with *Guitar & Bass* to demonstrate the range of Fender, Gretsch and Ricky-type sounds – and even a credible Les Paul sound via the high-pass filter – of his brand-new signature Fender Jaguar, and to reveal how the guitar came to be.

G&B: You have a long history with Gretsch and Rickenbacker guitars. When did you decide to move to playing a Fender Jaguar?
JM: Well, that came around in August 2005 when I went to play with Modest Mouse as an experiment. I had a riff which I wrote in the UK but I'd forgotten about, and the first night of writing Isaac Brock and I were playing riffs at each other very loud and he kept shouting at me 'Got any riffs?' and almost out of fear and abject terror – because he was pretty drunk – I played this riff on my Telecaster, and it just wouldn't sound how I wanted it to sound.

I noticed Isaac had a bunch of guitars that were in various states of disrepair, and one of those was a dusty old Jag. I just grabbed that because it seemed to be the least damaged, to be honest. It was still pretty beaten up, though. I started playing the riff on that, and it worked great. I had a connection with the sound of that guitar, first off, and secondly I really liked the way it was making me play, so I immediately made this decision – which was the same decision which got me into Rickenbackers – and that was that this guitar will steer me, force me to play in a certain kind of way which will benefit my songwriting... and that's to say not bluesy, or classic rock.

> *'I had a connection with the sound of the Jag. I liked the way it was making me play'*

G&B: Has the guitar always dictated the way you play?
JM: The reason I got into Rickenbackers back in the days of the Smiths was so my songwriting would be more about chord changes and arpeggios – and that's the way it turned out, because you just don't go down that rock road too much. No matter what kind of distortion you have on a Ricky, the strings are too close together. The way the bridge is set up isn't useful for bluesy soloing; you just have to play a lot of ringing-out chords. It wasn't even an aesthetic decision, although that's still an important thing, particularly when you're young and playing guitar.

G&B: What led you to go down the signature guitar route?
JM: The first time I got into a Jag, playing that riff, I was like 'Where have you been all my life?' Then, because I joined Modest Mouse, that became the guitar of choice for the band. We gigged and gigged over a three-year period, and the records were pretty successful in America. We were just working all the time, and I started picking up old Jags, and people were loaning them to me as well. As I like to say, my world became the length of my guitar lead because we were playing shows five nights a week for a couple of years... or that's what it seemed like. I was in the same situation every night, so I was able to try out all these different Jags.

Johnny played his Jaguar on the Cribs album *Ignore The Ignorant* and was a paid member of the band from 2009 to 2011

Before the Cribs Marr played with US alternative rockers Modest Mouse from 2006 to 2009

The way the signature Fender Jaguar came about was I wanted to build my ultimate Jag, and when Fender found out I was doing that they then approached me and said 'We'll do it as a signature model.' They were very helpful in assisting me in getting it together, but they also left me alone to do it... almost the way I do records. I was like 'Okay, just give me some support when I need it. Send me some bridges, send me some bodies.' So me and the guy who's been doing my guitars since 1987 down in London just painstakingly worked on this Jag. I developed it over a period of five years playing with Modest Mouse and the Cribs, doing hundreds of gigs. I forced myself to play just the one guitar, and if it wasn't working the way I wanted it to work then I wanted to know why, and I would then fix that. I pretty much did the whole of the *Ignore The Ignorant* album with the Cribs using that prototype.

G&B: Tell us about the main changes you made.
JM: Because I love what the Jag did, I wanted to keep all the great aspects that make a Jag a Jag, but get rid of what I would call 'unwanted conditions'. The first one is that normally on an old Jag you have three switches here [Marr points to the location of the four-way switch on his signature model]. Two of them switch pickups on, and one is a high-pass filter. Now, crucially, those two also switch the pickups *off*, so when you're playing in a band like the Cribs and there's a lot of rhythm playing going on and the other guitarist is leaning on you and falling on you and all of that, it means the guitar can just switch off. That's why you get so many Jag players from the '90s turning up in photographs with duct tape all over their guitar! So that was a pain I needed to address.

'I wanted to keep all the great aspects of the Jag but get rid of the unwanted conditions'

Secondly, on the other side, the rhythm circuit switch did the same thing. You'd be playing and your sound suddenly went [makes muffled noises] and you would swing round, bitch at everybody and look at your amp, and nine times out of 10 you'd realise it was the switch! You don't expect your guitar to just change its tone, you know? So that was another unwanted condition.

Another one is that the bridges would go lower and lower over a period of about 10 to 15 shows. One of the great things about the Jag is the sound and the tremolo unit, but all the vibration makes the screws actually turn themselves round. I went through all the old wives' tales. I put Locktite on, but the vibrations were so strong that the screws still turned round. I even tried nail polish, all of that. Then I'd get to a soundcheck after a dozen shows, try my pedals and say 'what's that sound?' It was like digital distortion, and it was always because the bridge had dropped down. So we sorted that out by using fatter screws which sit in these nylon feet. It's a brilliant and elegant solution. Now when you set it up, it stays set up.

We also sorted it so the tremolo arm doesn't have any play in it. As soon as you touch it it responds, and it also doesn't move around because we added a plastic sleeve inside. You think you'd come up with that in seconds but no, it took 18 months. We tried all sorts of screws and bolts and all manner of locking systems on there, and it was only by going through all these 'almost right' systems we eventually came up with the solution of having the arm fitted into the bushing.

G&B : The neck is very different, more like a '60s Strat.
JM : I wanted to make the neck size exactly the ➔

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'I don't have too many guitars... but how many would that be?' laughs Johnny Marr. 'I don't run around buying up loads of guitars or anything like that. I've just been very lucky in that when I first started being able to afford buying great guitars, they weren't called "vintage". There wasn't a vintage market as such... they were just old guitars that nobody wanted.

'In the early '80s there was myself, Robin Guthrie from the Cocteaus, Edwyn Collins and Roddy Frame and a few other indie guys all playing old Gretsches and the odd old Strat or two, but you'd look around when you were doing TV shows and people all had shiny purple things with mad trems on. I got lucky when I first made some money – old guitars weren't the price of an expensive new guitar. I still don't think of my stuff as a collection – it's just things I've amassed over the years to do different jobs.'

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Listen up

THE CRIBS
Ignore the Ignorant
2009
Johnny first lent his skills to this Yorkshire outfit in 2008 and had joined the band in time to record on this album with his Jaguar

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right size for me. That was one of the more straightforward things because I wanted it to behave more like my 1962 model, which is great.

GB: So was the development a very organic process from the starting point of the old Jaguar to now?
JM: Yeah. It was over a period of a few years, but all the time. I was working on it every day and I would have a prototype we thought was right. I used it on the *Inception* soundtrack, when normally the situation would call for an SG sound or a 335 sound, and I would pull out my white Jag and you could see the engineer thinking 'That guitar is not going to do the job,' and I thought 'Hang on a minute,' and I decided we need this to have a series position and a humbucking position, and that's what the switch does now.

So because of the diversity of the work that I do and that I've done, this guitar has been through a load of different situations. It's not just been me putting it in one setting and playing my riffs... it's been in a load of different bands and different positions, plus a couple of movies and a lot of guesting.

It's actually simpler than an original Jag. A little bit of me wanted to take on board criticisms of the guitar from naysayers and see if I could fix them – like people assuming they are too bright. The pickups are darker-sounding, but still a Jag. And the neck... I have pretty small hands so I didn't want a giant neck, and this is about as big as would work on a Jag without being silly. You can get all your first-position chords comfortably; I find the older Jags a little too small to do that right down there. It's not quite like an acoustic, but compared to a regular Jag it's more like a '65 neck.

'My tech said "Oh, it sounds like a Ricky and a Gretsch but you play it like a Fender"'

G&B: Can you use this guitar for pretty much every purpose now?
JM: When we got this guitar finished and I played it through my set-up, my tech said to me 'Oh, right, it sounds like a Ricky and a Gretsch but you play it like a Fender,' and I said 'Exactly!' It takes care of what I'm supposed to sound like, and if I'd had it 20 years ago I'd still have sounded pretty much like the records I was making.

That was a really interesting thing for me, because I've been able to do this guitar at a time in my life where I've gone through all these different journeys. I'm still continuing, but I understand now what I want from my sound. In a way, that's been projected back to me by audiences, by people who buy records, by people who follow me and all that. I'm fine with that now, and I wouldn't be so gauche or crass as to do anything that was parodying myself, but when I do something that's supposed to sound like me I'm not trying to change it.

GB : You were once quoted as saying you believed the Telecaster was the perfect guitar if you have to sing and play. Has that view changed now?
JM : That's a really good question. I was wrestling with that when I decided I was going to put the band back together about a year or so ago, and I was wondering if that very thing would work. Luckily for me this Jag gets rid of all that stuff that would make it like driving an old race car around the track. The great thing about the old Jags, to use that analogy, is you have to keep your eye on the gears. You're watching the bridge doesn't go down, you have to watch the switches, you need to remember which switch is up and which is down. Well, I don't have to worry about any of that any more, because it's as reliable and sturdy as any Tele. That was the final test – and it's been really good so far.'

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Havana Club

Mexican acoustic masters Rodrigo Y Gabriela have returned with a Cuban collaboration that'll knock your socks off. **Rik Flynn** investigates

Guitars

Guitars

Rodrigo: Yamaha NTX series Yamaha electro-classic, Conde Hermanos classical, Les Paul 1957 Fender lap steel
Gabriela: Yamaha NTX series Yamaha electro-classic, Conde Hermanos classical

And another thing...

As well as collaborating with numerous musicians including Metallica's bassist Robert Trujillo, Rage Against The Machine's Zac De La Rocha and Al Di Meola, Rodrigo and Gabriela have recently contributed to both the *Puss'n'Boots* and *Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* soundtracks

Rodrigo Y Gabriela are a curious thing. Their growing popularity no doubt comes from the fact that they are guitarists of the highest merit, but equally fascinatingly, theirs is not your standard biography. The story of this nylon-string-bothering twosome reads more like a rite-of-passage narrative than the standard rock fare. It's even got the gratifying rags-to-riches denouement.

Once upon a time in Mexico, then-drummer Rodrigo Sanchez and Metallica-loving guitarist Gabriela Quintero could be found flailing their manes to the grind of their thrash metal band, Tierra Acida. Read on, and in 1999 their story takes them far away to the cobbled streets of Dublin. On arrival in Ireland's capital they found the promise of free digs instantly going up in smoke with a scribbled note pinned on a front door. As with many a good yarn, things were not looking too rosy for our protagonists.

With their meagre kitty soon dwindling and without a word of English between them, it seemed busking was the only way out of a sticky predicament. As the chapters fly by, mentally strolling the streets we'd soon come across a large crowd horseshoed around two seated figures clutching battered acoustics, blending the songbooks of their beloved metal heroes with a unique and addictive melee of Mexican, Spanish and Middle Eastern flavours. This marriage of genres resulted in an incredible sound – a sound that, after an eponymous number one record in Ireland in 2006, led to the beginnings of a global fingerstyle phenomenon.

Rodrigo and Gabriela have shifted truckloads of records, racked up millions of YouTube hits and become a live music-lover's favourite, with a creativity way out there on its own. Closer inspection of Rodrigo Sanchez's swift-fingered style reveals the metal sensibilities that underpin his approach; never far from his side is Gabriela Quintero – quite simply nothing less than a whirlwind of rhythmic guitar brilliance.

After the runaway success of their debut, they continued stretching their imaginations with 2009's stunning *11:11*, with each track a tribute to a favourite artist. Now, once again, our intrepid duo have taken their partnership one step beyond. What began as a respite in their musical year has grown into far more; for new album *Area 52*, they enlisted a full 13-piece Cuban band to re-imagine nine of their songs, and it's a massive sound to behold.

'We'd been touring the *11:11* album for two and a half years,' recalls Rodrigo. 'As soon as we'd finished we were going to go back into the studio, so I proposed something to do in the meantime. I thought, "Let's just do Cuban versions of those songs," but as soon as the project started it got more and more intricate; a totally different, really big project.'

How did the band come about? 'Basically it was this guy, Pablo Herrera. He's a Cuban guy who lives in Scotland,' explains Rodrigo. 'He used to work with all these musicians there. So he went to Cuba and looked for who would be available and interested. He was sending us videos. He sent five videos of trumpet players, same with the flute player, same with the rest... so we had a chance to pick the band. We ended up with some young musicians, some very experienced musicians. Some of them play in big bands. It's a good mix and it was a very funny way to get introduced!'

Photo: David Moulin

And so *Area 52*'s house band, C-U-B-A, was born. The pair then decamped to Havana to really get into the spirit of things. 'We always wanted to go but we'd never had the chance,' says Rodrigo. 'So it was a good opportunity to have the excuse to record there. It really inspired us and C-U-B-A, felt comfortable because it was a studio they'd been recording in for years. Some of them have done about 700 albums!'

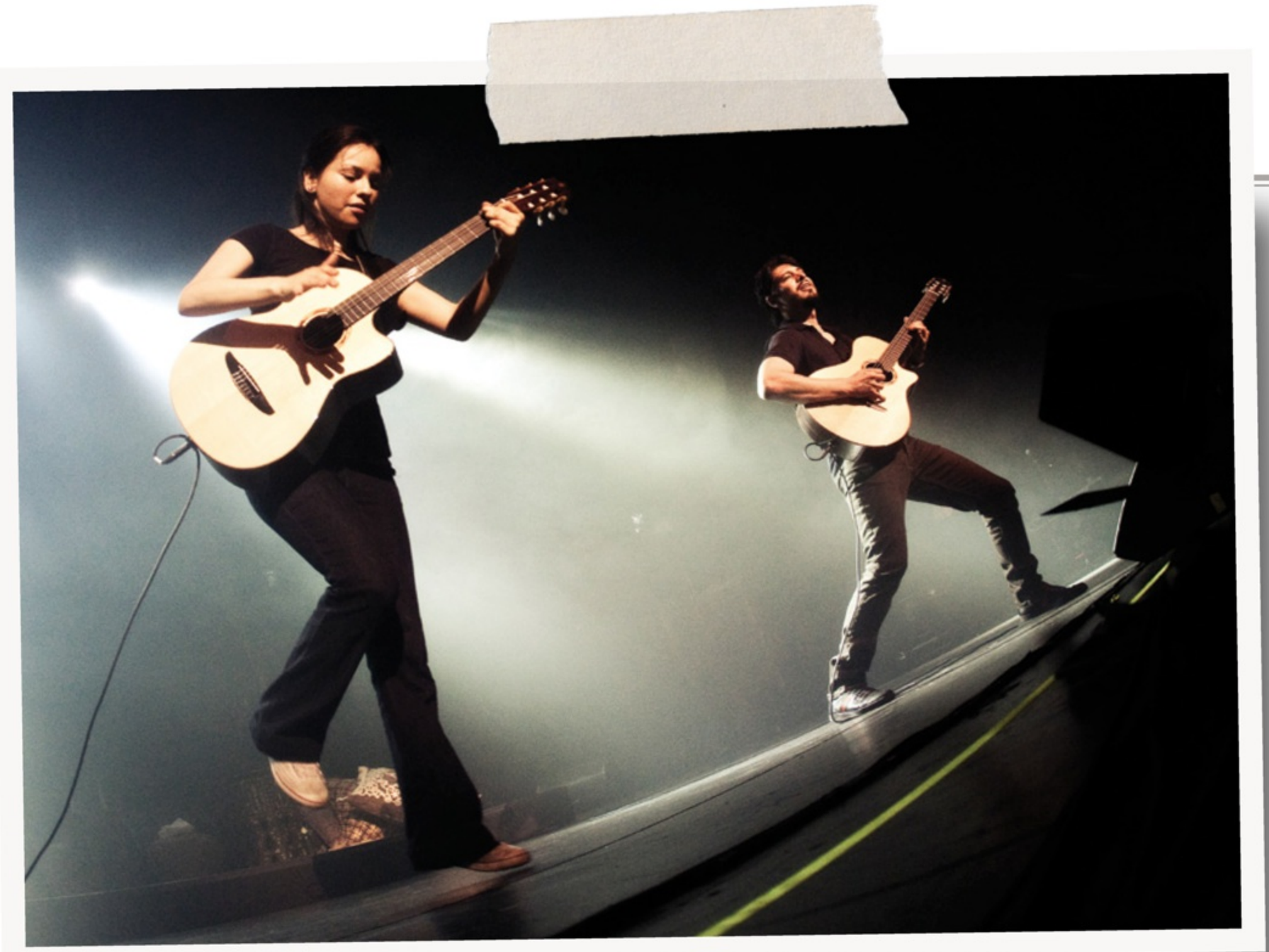
As is usual for Rodrigo Y Gabriela, the plan was that there was no plan. 'From the moment we started, we didn't have any rules. We were going to go with the same sounds as before but with Cuban musicians, but it didn't turn out like that at all. I'm having to listen back to the album like crazy to get into the whole structure 'cos the details are different – like the changes, the timings... there's whole new parts. It's a brainstorm! I completely changed all the solos too! I think probably 60 per cent of the music and the arrangements are different. We don't think too hard about what we do... that's the way it happens with us on stage. That's why our crowd is pretty eclectic.'

Go to a Rodrigo Y Gabriela gig and you'll see that Rodrigo isn't exaggerating. 'You see hippies, heavy metal guys, jazz guys, world music heads,' comments Rodrigo. 'It's quite a mix, so we don't worry much about what we want to do. As soon as we feel it and it feels right – we just do it.'

'Our gigs get hippies, heavy metal guys, jazz guys, world music heads – quite a mix'

C-U-B-A were recorded live in the studio with some stunning arrangements provided by British composer Alex Wilson. Isn't it strange for an Englishman to play such an important role in a Cuban-themed record?

'I wanted someone to understand that we come from a different world,' ponders Rodrigo. 'I didn't want to do a Buena Vista Social Club kind of thing... I wanted to do something else. A lot of the musicians in Cuba ➔



knew who Alex was because he's done a few recordings there already. I was very happy that a lot of these Cuban guys respected him.'

Despite the Cuban sound, it was important for the duo to retain their own identity. 'When I went back to Mexico we had all the orchestra recorded but we got rid of the guitar guide-tracks we did in Cuba and recorded everything again. We wanted to make it sound more like us – get some balance, bring more guitars into it.

'We also wanted to bring the rock back into the whole equation as much as we could. Gab did her normal rhythm vibe, but she added some parts with a wah-wah too. Normally she does that live, but for this album she wanted to make it sound a little bit funkier in parts and take away a little bit of the Latin thing so we could balance a little bit of both worlds.'

Rodrigo used a few different instruments to achieve a palette of sounds. For electric parts he reached for a Custom Shop Gibson Les Paul that he got from their Memphis workshop, and his lap steel is another pride and joy. 'It's a 1957 Fender from an old shop in New York. I was lucky that I found it! I do some songs with that, and I also use a steel-string Yamaha. It's a really, really different kind of sound to what we normally do.'

> *'I want to go back to my metal roots and do some kind of an acoustic heavy thing'*

When it comes to acoustics, Rodrigo and Gabriela are both Yamaha endorsers. 'Gabriela's guitar has seven piezos in it and mine has five!' clarifies Rodrigo. 'She uses more parts of the body of the guitar, and I use mainly just the bottom part of the front of the body. Hers has a little bit more width, so it's a little bit bigger with a deeper sound through the wood. My one has a thinner body and more frets – 24. We both prefer a very, very low action.' For *Area 52*, however, they chose not to use the Yamahas: instead, they got two guitars made by legendary luthiers Conde Hermanos (Conde Brothers). 'They've been there for over 100 years. We got a pair of amazing guitars built for us,' enthuses Rodrigo. 'We recorded the album with them. We had to wait for a little bit over four months. It was a good process.'

What were the issues that the pair encountered during the process of getting the guitars built? 'One of the main problems we had was the action. It was difficult because it's really, really low for an acoustic with nylon strings. Conde really struggled. We had to send them back three times to get the action as low as we wanted. I think that all comes down to all those years we spent playing electric.'

The Rodrigo and Gabriela narrative continues as they approach the next chapter – another fresh concept that will undoubtedly leave live audiences slack-jawed once again. Where will their story take them after that?

'We need a break!' laughs Rodrigo. 'After this short tour I reckon we'll just go back home and think about our next album.

'Actually, I have an idea already, but I haven't sat down and tried it. I want to go back a bit to my heavy metal roots and do some kind of acoustic heavy thing. Let's see how the year turns out – but that's the plan.'

As another page turns, theirs is a book we can't see ourselves putting down any time soon.

Listen up

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA
Rodrigo Y Gabriela (2006)
Debuting at number one in the Irish charts, the duo's third album features covers of Led Zeppelin's *Stairway To Heaven* and Metallica's *Orion*

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA
11:11 (2009)
Featuring songs inspired by all their favourite artists including Hendrix, Santana and Pink Floyd, *11:11* reveals the pair at the height of their game

RODRIGO Y GABRIELA
Area 52 (2012)
This year's outing with Cuban band C-U-B-A sees Rodrigo and Gabriela stretching their limits once again. Sonically diverse and truly addictive

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For any serious guitarist to visit Cuba without giving a traditional Cuban Tres guitar (a mixture of a guitar, a tiple and a bandola) a strum would be a sad loss. Rodrigo went one step further and expanded his collection.

'I bought a Tres while I was there. I was taken to the house of one of the main Tres builders in Cuba, and I obviously had to get one! I always wanted to play that instrument and never could, so when I came back home with the Tres I learnt some of the Cuban rhythms.'

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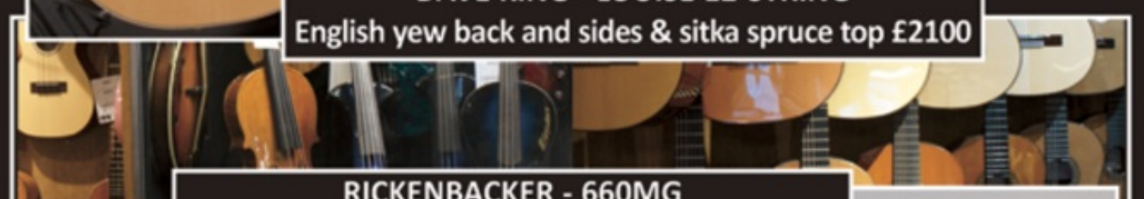

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Nat Martin

and his MUSIC MAN AXIS SPORT

Blues, rock, funk, jazz... this guitar does it all, but there's also a personal story which makes it irreplaceable

Photo: Matthew Joseph

Music schools are still thriving even in these tough economic times, and Nat Martin is living proof that academic study really can produce inspired musicians. Pick up a copy of his expansive, jazzy debut album *Don't Lose Your Cool* and we're sure you'll agree. But Nat didn't just get an education at Guildford's Academy of Contemporary Music – he also came away with what has become his most treasured guitar.

In 2003, ACM head of guitar and acoustic ace Eric Roche picked out Nat and presented him with the Student Of The Year award. What's more, as a prize he was handed a brand new Music Man Axis Sport.

'I remember going up on stage and Eric shaking my hand and saying "No one deserves it more that you, man," recalls Nat. 'The guitar is very important to me because it was presented by Eric, and obviously he's not with us anymore.'

Roche died from cancer aged just 37 in 2005, and Nat has warm memories of the man. 'You always felt that as a student of his he expected you to be committed. You had to be on it, keep your wits about you and keep working hard. He commanded your respect. And when you heard him play, you couldn't help but respect his amazing ability.'

> *'They're about the most comfortable guitars you'll find. I just fell in love with it'*

Roche taught Nat so well that he's followed in his mentor's footsteps by becoming a tutor at the college himself – even teaching theory, which is exactly what he was taught by Roche. 'We still use the overview that Eric wrote for that course. They've got on a plaque with a quote from Eric etched on it: "Music is a language. Just make sure you've got something to say."'

All this makes the Music Man a very special guitar. 'They're just the most comfortable guitars you're ever going to find. I fell in love with it pretty much as soon as I started playing it. The necks are lovely... I think it's that "unfinished" thing.'

Despite it very much being a humbucking guitar, Nat reckons you can still get a lot of sounds out of it, single-coil type tones included. 'My lead sound is pretty much exclusively the bridge pickup – it's a kind of Robben Ford-influenced tone. I like that meatiness. I use as heavy strings as I can manage, which is 0.011"s. You've got your bridge, middle and neck settings, but then you've got your out of phase settings in between. I found that you can create extra out of phase sounds if you jam it half on between the middle and the neck and also the middle and the bridge... that's where you can get a really good sharp sound. It's a versatile-sounding thing, really – almost like a seven-way switch!'

Another favourite sound is the jazzy tone that can be coaxed from the neck pickup. 'Just hit the top string and roll the tone off until you get a little bite and there it is,' Nat says.

The Music Man has been gigged around Guildford regularly, and Nat was using it for a show at the local Pizza Express when another famous Eric turned up.

'I was playing in a jazz duo, and Eric Clapton walked in!' laughs Nat. 'I got really nervous and started playing way too many notes, but I think he tapped his foot for a bit. He seemed like he was enjoying it.'

Of course Clapton was born up the road and still lives locally, and even international superstars needs the sustenance of an occasional Quattro Stagioni. Has he ever turned up at the college to do a turn for the students? 'He hasn't,' says Nat, 'but loads of guys like Mike Stern and Roscoe Beck have come in recently. Eric's probably quite busy what with world tours and suchlike, but if we could get him in it'd be amazing. Mind you, he would probably be mobbed.'

Album

THE NAT MARTIN BAND

Don't Lose Your Cool

Funky, sophisticated but all with an irresistible groove that just won't let you be. Nat's guitar work is restrained yet compulsive, and fans of Steely Dan will love the vibe of this album

MORE INFO:
www.thenatmartinband.com or www.music-man.com

FRET-King by Trev Wilkinson

JD

"Jerry Donahue's finest guitar yet – Fret-King is really aiming for the stars..."

Guitarist CHOICE

Dave Burrluck,
Guitarist magazine.
Guitarist Choice Award.

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Jerry Donahue.

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Fret-King Black Label JD

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FENDER

Modern Player Marauder

Take one near-forgotten Fender oddball, change it lots and lots, add a monster pickup, and you've got the Marauder – the freshest guitar in the Chinese Modern Player series. Review by **Rick Batey**

Until now, uttering the words 'I play a Marauder' would leave any listeners' faces twitching with baffled incomprehension as they tried to work out whether you were referring to an obscure and little-missed bolt-on Gibson from the '70s, or whether you actually owned one of a handful of incredibly rare mid-'60s Fender prototypes... possibly even one of the legendary 'invisible pickup' models. Not any more, because Fender has resurrected the Marauder name and attached it to a surprising and rather original guitar in the new Chinese-made Modern Player series.

So, down to business. If you're a dyed-in-the-wool vintage Fender freak then your eyebrows will instantly elevate skywards, for this is a guitar for players who come to the Fender marque unencumbered by memories of the past. The body is all-new: though it echoes the old Marauder, which appeared in the 1965 catalogue but never escaped from the printed page and into the shops, it's been re-shaped into something that combines surfy underground cool with rock credibility, with a slimmed top horn and an artfully 'sharkified' lower cutaway. In a first for Fender, it's made of koto, a West African timber often seen on door veneers and the like, and at a shade under the 7lbs mark this is a very lightweight guitar indeed. As for colours you can choose from black or Lake Placid blue metallic, and the paintjob is flawless.

Jazzmaster headstock and vintage-style tuners

Traditional bolt-on neck with a super-tight neck pocket

The new Marauder is a guitar for players who come to the Fender marque unencumbered by the past

Picking up the Marauder for the first time, the overall feel of the neck and fingerboard reminds us of the Squier Classic Vibe Telecaster Custom or the '60s Strat (also made in China, of course): thin in profile, glossy on the back, with a fairly flat radius and low frets. The neck is perhaps a touch more sweetly rounded in the shoulders than the CV Tele Custom's, but string-benders may feel the low frets create a little too much fingertip contact with the slab rosewood board for perfection. The maple is a lovely straight-grained ➔

FACTFILE

Modern Player Marauder

DESCRIPTION
Solidbody electric guitar. Made in China
PRICE **£442.80**

BUILD **Koto body, maple neck with rosewood fingerboard, 22 jumbo frets. Vintage-style vibrato bridge, six-in-a-line vintage machineheads**

ELECTRICS **Fender Triplebucker (bridge), Fender Modern Player Jazzmaster (neck), five-way switch, master volume and tone controls**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Black (as reviewed), Lake Placid blue**

SCALE LENGTH
648mm/25.5"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42.0mm
12th fret 51.8mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 21.2mm
12th fret 23.0mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35.5mm
Bridge 51.0mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 1.6mm
12th fret bass 2.0mm
WEIGHT **3.13kg/6.9lb**

CONTACT **Fender UK**
01342 331700
www.fender.com

Like this? Try this...

Fender
Blacktop Jazzmaster HS
The Marauder's nearest Fender-made rival is this, made in Mexico with a traditional Jazzmaster vibrato and neck pickup plus a bridge humbucker. Quirky but rather good
RRP **£539**

Ibanez
NDM2BK
A remake of the Noodles signature first made in 1994, with cool oddball looks, pearloid guard and useful H/S/H pickups
RRP **£575**

Reverend
Six Gun
Stylish solidbody with Wilkinson trem and three pickups: distinctive looks and plenty of twangy power
RRP **£549**

piece, though cut on the slab not the quarter. There are 22 frets, the scale is the regular long 25.5", and trussrod adjustment is located up at the wide Jazzmaster-shaped headstock with its smooth vintage tuners, twin string trees and large 'spaghetti' logo.

Fender's cleverly-configured new Triplebucker crams three narrow coils with blades, not separate polepieces, into a regular humbucker-sized space. The neck pickup is a Modern Player Jazzmaster single coil, and both are surrounded by a funky pearloid-topped four-ply scratchplate which butts, Jazz Bass-style, up against a chrome control plate with two Jazz Bass knobs. Unscrew this and you'll find a properly paint-shielded cavity and two mini-pots of the familiar Far Eastern type.

The vibrato is a basic vintage Strat-type resting on six pivot screws, with bent-steel saddles and a screw-in arm with all the familiar drawbacks. Around the back, the spring cavity is covered by a pearloid plate. The vibrato – set up with three springs – feels light and tight and returns to pitch pretty well, but the arm protrudes out as far as the neck pickup's polepieces, leaving vibrato-holding players picking over the end of the fingerboard. We'd do a chop job and shorten the arm an inch or so.

The new Triplebucker looks high-powered, but don't be deceived

Ergonomics are good. The Marauder feels neat and compact, and balances perfectly on a strap. The bridge saddles on our review guitar do protrude awkwardly into the palm, though, so shorter grub screws (or a mild neck-shim and set up) might be in order. The horizontal selector switch requires a measured Tele-style sideways push as opposed to a faster Strat-style swipe, but that's no great hardship.

The Marauder is like a humbuckered Strat in a package that combines indie cred with a whiff of kooky '60s charm

A regular Jazzmaster pickup by the neck offers sweet, warm cleans

Sounds

Don't assume the Marauder operates like a Jazzmaster with a monsterbucker jammed in at the bridge. It's more sophisticated than that, and in effect it's rather more like a superstrat arrangement, with the five switch settings laid out to give the two loudest sounds on the outside, growing incrementally – and intuitively – softer towards the middle.

Position 1 gives the humbucker in twin-coil mode, and it's loud, bright, fat and proud. Use that for leads, then click to position 2 – all three coils but, surprisingly, with less output... a fine, chunky all-round rhythm slot.

Position 3 is the centremost coil of the Triplebucker on its own: skinny, pointy and the quietest setting of the five, and a useful sound for surf and edgy background parts. Position 4 is this coil again, plus the Jazzmaster pickup, and it's reminiscent of the bridge/middle setting on a Strat. Finally we have the Jazzmaster pickup alone, and its open, woody, twangy-yet-jazzy sound reminds us of just how impressed we are with all the pickups across the Modern Player range. This is a really adaptable guitar; from metal to rock and country to indie, you'll probably find a pickup setting that works.

Verdict

A spy working in a music shop reports a fresh-faced young band being sent in their advance to buy new instruments. 'No Strats,' they informed him. 'The record company says it's the wrong image.' Here, perhaps, is a guitar that could satisfy the needs of the bright-eyed pop hopefuls and their clueless, meddling overlords: a trad vibrato plus all the adaptability of a humbuckered Strat in a package that combines indie cred with a whiff of kooky '60s charm. Fender's Modern Player six-strings all add unexpected pickup layouts to familiar faces of the past: P90s in a Thinline, P90s in a Jaguar, three pickups with a humbucker in a Tele. This one's the most original of the four, and with build quality similar to the Classic Vibes, you can be sure that it's good enough for the stage. If the low frets, flat board and slim neck appeal to you, then the light weight and fresh looks will likely push your wallet over the edge without even a squeak of complaint.

FINAL SCORE

FENDER MODERN PLAYER MARAUDER	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**16**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**86%**

Image courtesy of: www.mattcass.co.uk

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GIBSON
Melody Maker Special

Recent Melody Makers have been great, save for the skinny single coils. Now an uncool band are responsible, indirectly, for a very cool guitar. Would would have thought it? Review by **Richard Purvis**

FACTFILE
Gibson Melody Maker Special

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody electric guitar. Made in USA**
PRICE **£550 including padded gigbag**

BUILD **Mahogany body, set mahogany neck with 22-fret baked maple fingerboard, wraparound bridge**

ELECTRICS **Two P90s with three-way switch, master volume and tone controls**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Satin yellow (as reviewed), satin cherry, satin ebony, blue stain**

SCALE LENGTH
629mm/24.75"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 51mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 21.5mm
12th fret 21.5mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 36mm
Bridge 51mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 3mm
WEIGHT **3.1kg/6.8lbs**

CONTACT **Gibson Europe**
0031 347 324010
www.gibson.com

Let's hear it for the Jonas Brothers – we owe it all to them. No, really, we do. The promising-looking guitar at the top of this page is the legacy of none other than Joe, Kevin and Nick, America's favourite Disney-endorsed boyband. This is basically a non-signature version of the 2010 Jonas Brothers Melody Maker, right down to the twin P90s and Les Paul headstock. The general reaction to that launch seemed to be one of dismay that such a wicked-looking guitar should be defaced with the autographs of a bunch of teenybop muppets, but it seems that Gibson was listening.

But there's a political story behind the MM Special that goes deeper than anyone's fondness or otherwise for insipid punk-pop – because the fact is, everyone seems to have it in for Gibson nowadays. On one side they've been taking stick over the much-delayed launch of the expensive and extravagant Firebird X; on the other, they've been hounded by the US Justice Department over supposedly illegal imports of ebony, rosewood and probably three-ply toilet paper as well. The combined solution to both of these problems? Build more affordable guitars using non-endangered fretboard woods. That's been the rationale behind instruments like the LP Studio Tribute models and now this little cutie, which has one structural difference from the Jonas version: a baked maple fretboard. Yes, baked – not like a chocolate-chip muffin but with a heat treatment called torrefaction which turns pale maple dark and uncannily rosewood-like in appearance. The board on this guitar looks and also feels and sounds just like the real thing, so this could well be a sustainable way forward.

Tunnelling back to the days before the Disney Channel, we emerge in 1959 – and the launch of the original Melody Maker. This was a 'student' version of the Les Paul, with a slender mahogany body and no maple top, either one ➔

Mahogany neck and body plus a choice of yellow, black and blue finishes

A big welcome back for the full-width headstock

The Special is a non-signature Jonas Brothers Melody Maker, right down to the P90s and the Les Paul headstock

Like this? Try this...

Tokai
ULSS195
All mahogany with a real rosewood fingerboard, here's proof that a Far Eastern 'copy' doesn't have to be cheaper than the American original
RRP **£1650**

Vintage
VR100
Similar in looks to our review guitar, but with a maple/rosewood neck and stacked humbuckers more like P100s than P90s
RRP **£289**

Gibson
SG Special '60s Tribute
Twin P90s, small scratchplate and wraparound tailpiece: a very appetising recreation of the early-'60s SG Special
RRP **£650**

or two skinny single-coil pickups, and an artlessly simple 'wingless' headstock design. There was no tailpiece, just a wraparound bridge, and the finish was sunburst only. As we've already seen, the new version updates this spec with P90s and a full-size headstock, making it effectively a hybrid of the '59 Melody Maker and the single-cutaway Les Paul Special (thus the name).

The Jonas boys specified white, presumably to match their acne-free image; happily we're now offered a host of vibrant shades including this satin yellow, a descendant of the 'limed mahogany' used on the TV Junior and TV Special. As a colour scheme it could not be sexier, although this is perhaps not as lustworthy a design as, for example, the Junior Doublecut – the blobby bits of scratchplate around the tops of the pickups look a bit cartoony, don't you think? And the neck join with its little square ledge on the treble side may be period-correct but it does upper-fret access no favours at all.

There are only two knobs, a master volume and tone – like the uncompensated one-piece bridge, this would have been a cash-saving compromise in 1959 but in 2012 it

That fingerboard isn't rosewood, but baked maple. We'll be seeing a lot more of it

reeks of blood, sweat, Doc Martens and tone-friendly simplicity. Build quality looks to be good, save for some snaggy fret-ends towards the top of the neck on our review sample, while both pickups needed lowering a touch.

Sounds

It may have Lester's name on it but this guitar weighs about as much as the strap buttons on a conventional

and complexity, with some interesting things happening high up the neck on the wound strings in particular. Pure Chicago blues is not out of the question.

The neck pickup is deceptively smooth, and backing off a few notches on the tone control takes us into boopy jazz land. The only non-ecstatic thing to be said is that all the sounds are accompanied by more background hum than you'd expect from PAF-types of similar output – which makes sense, of course, as 'humbucker' is a descriptive term, and the P90 isn't one.

Verdict

It's easy to dismiss Melody Makers as the weedy-toned runts of the Gibson litter – you might even think they're not 'proper' Gibsons at all – but this is the runt that roared. This US-built livewire is a cracking guitar by any standards... and it's the cheapest two-pickup model they're currently making.

The neck pickup is surprisingly jazzy, the middle setting is bluesy... and if you have even a drop of punk attitude in your bloodstream, three chords on the bridge pickup will have you pogo-ing through the ceiling with joy. Whether you call this a Melody Maker with better pickups or a Les Paul Special with half the knobs and a sliver of wood missing, it's a triumph of tone and simplicity. Let's hear it for the Jonas Brothers!

This livewire is a cracking guitar by any standards – and it's the cheapest two-pickup model they currently make

Uncompensated wraparound bridge and black top hat control knobs

LP – not so surprising when the body is barely an inch and a quarter thick (roughly the same as an SG). But does lightness mean a trashy acoustic tone? Of course it doesn't. The Melody Maker may not be the most sophisticated piece of timber in the Gibson line but there's plenty of low-end resonance when you hit big chords, and no shortage of sheer loudness either. Some might call it brash, but this is a well-balanced voice with an eagerness in the midrange that promises top-notch punk larks once the amp is warmed up.

'Thrappy' may not be a real word, but it's the only one that'll really do to describe the sound of a lightly overdriven P90 being allowed to speak its mind. More middly than a PAF humbucker but softer-edged than a Telecaster's bridge pickup, it's a priceless tone and one that the Melody Maker Special expresses beautifully in all three switch positions. It doesn't take much gain to get the bridge unit well and truly rocking the casbah, while moving onto the middle setting adds just the right amount of warmth

FINAL SCORE

GIBSON MELODY MAKER SPECIAL	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**19**/20
Value for money	**19**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**91%**

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Hagstrom

HAGSTROM

Viking Rex Tone & Ultralux

Great value and different, these guitars – a moody semi-solid and an adaptable set-neck whammy machine – come with super-slim necks and with their European ancestry still apparent. Review by **Huw Price**

The name suggests hot humbuckers, divebombing trems and pointy horns, but the Viking Rex Tone Granitic Metal is based on one of Hagstrom's longest-running semi-solids. The Ultralux XL5 represents the opposite extreme of Hagstrom's range: it's an all out rock/metal guitar with what Hagstrom calls 'the fastest neck on the planet'. Can these imports with Swedish DNA impress?

Viking Rex Tone Granitic Metal

The formula is tried and tested: a pressed maple ply front and back over a solid centre block with a set maple neck. Although the 22-fret fingerboard looks very like ebony, it's a synthetic material Hagstrom calls 'resinator' – a wood composite glued under very high pressure like MDF, but denser and dyed black. Resinator fingerboards, Hagstrom says, eliminate dead spots and wolftones while maintaining the tonal qualities associated with ebony.

Hagstrom's H-Expander runs the entire length of the neck and provides tension at both ends. The rod itself is made from a lightweight alloy with an 'H' profile designed to allow for very low action with thin necks.

The H-Expander truss rod allows for a seriously slender neck

A 335-style centre block helps sustain and keeps feedback at bay

The Viking Rex has an impressive range of sounds from woody and mellow to snappy and funky to heavy rock tones

The Viking Rex Tone comes with a pair of Custom 58 humbuckers with Alnico 5 magnets. Controls are fairly standard, but the three-way pickup selector lies on the upper horn. The lower switch is like a Gretsch 'mud switch'. It's off in the centre; in the 'down' position it scrapes off some treble; set 'up', the filter reaches further down into the midrange. ➔

FINAL SCORE

HAGSTROM VIKING REX TONE	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Playability	**16**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**16**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**82%**

FACTFILE

Hagstrom Viking Rex Tone

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody guitar. Made in China**
PRICE **£515.74**

BUILD **Maple ply body with solid centre block, 22-fret set maple neck, Resinator fingerboard, diecast tuners, adjustable bridge**
ELECTRICS **Two custom 58 humbuckers, three-way pickup selector switch, individual volume and tone controls, three-position treble roll-off switch**
LEFT-HANDER **Yes, in pearlescent red only**
FINISH **See website for options**

SCALE LENGTH
628mm/24.75"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 54mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 18mm
12th fret 22mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35.5mm
Bridge 53mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.5mm
12th fret bass 3mm
WEIGHT **3.5kg/7.7lbs**

CONTACT **Rosetti**
01376 550033
www.rosetti.co.uk
www.hagstromguitars.eu

FACTFILE
Hagstrom Ultralux

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody guitar. Made in China**
PRICE **£352.34**

BUILD **Basswood body with bookmatched flame maple veneer, 24-fret set maple neck, diecast tuners, knife edge vibrato bridge**
ELECTRICS **Two Custom 52 humbuckers and 1 HS-2M single coil, five-way selector switch, master volume and two tone controls (neck and middle), coil tap switch**
LEFT-HANDER **Yes, in satin black only**
FINISH **See website options**

SCALE LENGTH **648mm/25.5"**
NECK WIDTH
Nut 43mm
12th fret 53mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 18.5mm
12th fret 18.5mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 53mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.5mm
12th fret bass 3mm
WEIGHT **4kg/8.8lbs**

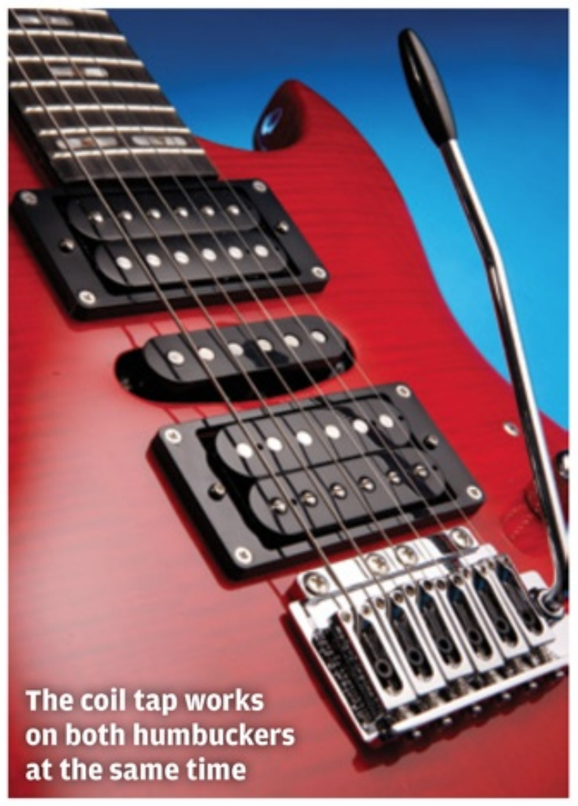
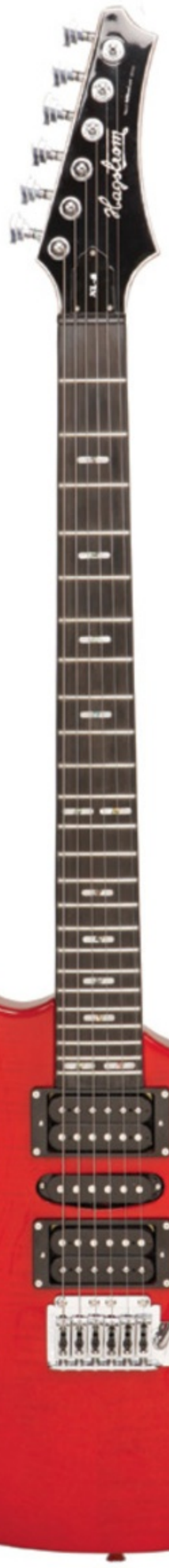
CONTACT **Rosetti**
01376 550033
www.rosetti.co.uk
www.hagstromguitars.eu

Like these? Try these..

Epiphone
ES-339 Pro
Basically a downsized 335 semi-hollowbody with coil-tappable Alnico Classic Pro humbuckers. Useful
PRICE: **£349**

Hofner
Verythin HCT-VTH-AMB Limited
A reissue of the later-type Verithin with maple body, set neck, rosewood fingerboard, 22 frets, two Hofner humbuckers and a Bigsby vibrato
PRICE: **£528**

Cort
X6 VPR
An alternative to the Ultralux is this mean-looking rock guitar with a basswood body, snakeskin finish, set maple neck, 24 fret fingerboard, two Cort Blue Bucker and one single coil pickup, a five-way switch, push/pull for coil splitting, Floyd Rose and black hardware
RRP: **£391**

The Ultralux's set neck is a bonus at this price

The coil tap works on both humbuckers at the same time

The coil tap turns this fire-breathing rocker into a more than passable funk, blues and country machine

Sounds

Some players refer to this type of bridge as a 'rattle-o-matic' and this example is a case in point. Despite a healthy break angle we experienced some pretty ferocious buzzing that we couldn't do anything to fix. It's a shame, because unplugged tests revealed inherent liveliness and resonance.

Plugging in allows the Viking Rex to produce an impressive range of classic semi-solid tones. Played clean, it's woody and mellow in the neck position then snappy and funky in the bridge and middle settings. Crank the amp or hit the overdrive and you can ease straight into BB King territory or heavy blues rock tones with ample sustain, expressive dynamics and easily controlled feedback.

We felt the pickups might have benefited from a touch more air in the top end for clarity and detail, but they're certainly smooth and refined. The medium profile extends all along the neck to provide an easy-playing if slightly characterless feel.

Unfortunately we're not convinced that Hagstrom has got the mud switch capacitor selection quite right. It's more vintage Gretsch than modern (and improved), but at least you can switch to a 'woman tone' instantaneously – if you're willing to put up with some accompanying pops and crackles.

Ultralux XL5 WCT

The XL5 has a set maple neck with plenty of chamfering around the neck joint area to facilitate access all the way up to the 24th fret. Think skinny, wide and flat with a 15" radius, and you'll be in the ballpark. Once again we find a resinator fingerboard, but this time there are neat pill-shaped abalone inlays between the jumbo frets. An opaque red-tinted finish slightly obscures the grain of the basswood body as well as the maple veneer front.

The pickup complement includes Custom 52 humbuckers for the neck and bridge with a HS-2M playing piggy. The closely-grouped controls comprise a master volume with two tone controls for the neck and bridge pickups, and a mini toggle switch that switches both humbuckers to single-coil mode. There's also a five-way pickup selector that's a bit glitchy and noisy in use. Leaving a load of dried-up and powdery polishing compound in the slot probably hasn't helped much.

The 'full contact' vibrato operates on a knife-edge pivot for low friction, and it reminds us of some of the bridges we've seen on recent Burns models. Unfortunately we couldn't really test its tuning stability because it was set tight against the body, and considerable effort was required to achieve even the subtlest vibrato.

Sound

Ceramic magnets provide these humbuckers with a brighter and clearer tone than the vintage-style Custom 58s. The XL5 benefits in two ways because it cuts through high-gain amp settings to retain clarity and low end tightness, and you can also get clean tones with great sparkle and presence. That's before you even think about engaging the coil tap switch and turning this slick-playing, fire-breathing HSH rocker into a more than passable SSS-equipped funk, blues and country machine.

Verdict

These guitars offer higher than average build quality, playability and sounds for the price. Both have various minor issues with their electrics and the Viking's bridge needed sorting. With front and back body binding, MOP headstock binding and inlays plus a lovely metallic blue/grey finish the Viking Rex catches the eye; the XL5 will please fledgling rockers, and it's hard to beat for easy access to a wide range of useful and distinctive tones.

FINAL SCORE

HAGSTROM ULTRALUX	
Build Quality	**16**/20
Playability	**16**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**81%**

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Hughes & Kettner

TubeMeister 18 Combo

With clever valve trickery, digital reverb, a four-step power soak and a tiny Thiele-Small enclosure for the Celestion speaker, this mini-combo sets out to accomplish a lot. Review by **Richard Purvis**

FACTFILE

TubeMeister 18 Combo

DESCRIPTION **18W combo, switchable to 5W, 1W or 'silent recording' mode, with custom Celestion G10 speaker; 2 x ECC83 and 2 x EL84 valves. Made in China**
PRICE **£655**

OPTIONS **Head version, £545; 1x12 cab with Celestion Vintage 30, £329**
CONTROL PANEL **Clean channel Gain and Master; push-buttons for channel-switching and lead boost; Lead channel Gain and Master; Bass, Middle and Treble (for both channels); Standby and Power switches**
BACK PANEL **8/16ohm output, 18W/5W/1W/silent output control, bias matching test point, DI out, footswitch input for channel-switching and lead boost, reverb level, FX loop send and return**

DIMENSIONS **39.5cm wide, 36cm high, 26cm deep**
WEIGHT **9.4kg/21lbs**

CONTACT **Headline Music 01223 874301 hughes-and-kettner.com**

The stereotypes say that anything German is tidy, efficient, polite and reliable. An afternoon with some early Einstürzende Neubauten albums would soon knock that idea out of your head... but might this neat package from Hughes & Kettner pop it back in again?

'Little' is the word. When the box arrived we assumed it must be the head, not a combo – but there's a 10" speaker in there, plus four valves and two oversized transformers. 18W will surely never get more compact than this.

Hughes & Kettner has been around since 1984. Like many modern makers they have embraced PCB construction methods, and it almost goes without saying that this amp was made in China. The speaker is a custom-designed Celestion G10; the valves comprise two EL84s plus just two ECC83s in the preamp section. You might think that's not enough to fuel two channels plus an extra gain boost without recourse to solid-state intervention, but the makers insist it is. Anyway, you won't be sticking to the all-valve signal path for long if you use the FX loop or, a welcome addition for the combo version, the built-in digital reverb. The reverb control is on the back panel rather than the top, and it can be turned to zero but not bypassed.

Blue super-bright panel lighting looks cool, but the knobs are hard to read

Little is the word, but there's a 10" speaker and four valves in there. 18W will surely never get more compact

The top panel has a three-band EQ that works on both channels plus gain and master volume controls for each, and two wobbly plastic buttons for channel-hopping and engaging the booster. There's no footswitch included.

Back on the back, a power soak control offers three levels of output – 18W, 5W or 1W – plus a mute option for silent recording through the DI output.

Next to that, you'll find the letters 'TSC' on a dinky picture of a valve. This stands for Tube Safety Control, it takes us into the world of biasing and it is quite peculiar. There are instructions for testing how well your power valves are matched with a plectrum – yes, a plectrum – and the TubeMeister promises to automatically adjust the bias every time it's idling, even

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RRP **£599**

Orange
Tiny Terror Combo
Another 1x12" combo with EL84s doing the work, but this time the emphasis is on old-fashioned British dirt
RRP **£484**

Hayden
HGT-A20
British-made three-channel combo pushing out 20W (switchable down to 2W) through a custom-designed 12" speaker
RRP **£399**

if you've installed mismatched valve types, and as long as the two red LEDs stay off then everything is working fine.

If it isn't, take half a day off work. The valves may be visible through the perspex strip, but they can only be accessed by taking the amp pretty much to bits – and the back panel on ours was screwed on so tightly that it nearly wouldn't come off without explosives. Two more bolts and the chassis can be coaxed out, but there are even more bolts and screws to battle with if you want to get at the main circuit board.

In Use

Powering up into standby, the orange glow of the output valves is outshone by a mysterious blue light emanating from around the control panel. You could probably read the words from space, but it's hard to see where the knobs are set because they only have titchy indents. Not a worry, though the lack of ventilation for the valves might be.

With the clean channel at full volume and gain low, chords on a Tele ring out bright and clear with almost no background noise. Single-coils stay crunch-free to halfway on the gain; it's a pure and simple sound, neither British nor American, clear but not huge – perhaps not surprising when you consider the dimensions of the cab. The master volume succeeds in making things quieter without sucking the blood out of the tone, and the EQ section is responsive without being radical.

Smooth black vinyl is protected by an included soft cover

Cleans are bright and clear and the overdrive channel is thick and riff-ready, though the 1x10" has limitations

The overdrive channel feels an awful lot louder, as you might expect, and unless you rehearse in an airship hangar you're likely to get a lot of use out of both gain and master volume controls. The purity of the TubeMeister's tone remains, but with a riff-ready thickness suited to both old-school rock and nu-skool metal. There's no shortage of dirt on offer, and it can be a challenge to keep things under control at full blast – the booster should probably be avoided for anything other than single-note solos, especially with hot humbuckers.

The limitations of the 1x10" format soon begin to show. Patching out to a 1x12" cab made a massive difference in terms of low-end oomph, leaving the TubeMeister's internal speaker sounding rather toy-like. The power soak works well and 'silent recording' takes a fine and lifelike amp tone into your audio interface. If you have an extra £200, the head-and-cab version has a Vintage 30 in a bigger enclosure.

Back panel carries power soak, TSC LEDs, DI out, footswitch socket, reverb and FX loop

Verdict

So, that stereotype. Tidy and efficient? In design terms, certainly. Polite? On the clean channel, yes. And reliable? Well that's up to the Chinese factory, but it's certainly hard to get inside the thing. In short this is a good amp, if not the most exciting or surprising. If you're a mojo-chasing tonehound who likes it hot, creamy and bubbling with character then the TubeMeister will probably leave most of your boxes unticked; but if a decent giggable tone in a small and portable package is all you're after, and you don't mind leaving things light at the bottom end, it could be the one for you.

FINAL SCORE

H&K TUBEMEISTER 18 COMBO	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Versatility	**17**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**15**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**81%**

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TO AMP 2
Output Volume
AMP OUT
RIG VOL
SW 1
SW 2
SCROLL
DIST
MOD
DELAY
REV
LOOP
FX1
FX2
TUNER

Avid Eleven Rack

Amp Emulation & Recording System

It's billed as a 'one stop shop' for the recording and live guitarist, but can a solitary rack unit really answer all your needs? **Marcus Leadley** investigates

The Eleven Rack is one of those bits of kit that needs a clear introduction. Amp/effects modelling processors and audio interfaces have been around for a long time, and it's not immediately obvious why a combination should really be so much better. So what can Eleven Rack do? You can use it as a standalone effects processor with a combo; you can drive a PA or power amp set-up with head, combo and cab models to emulate a multitude of classic rigs; you can send a fully emulated sound to the PA and, at the same time, a signal with just the effects to your stage amp so you can use it as a monitor.

You can create guitar sounds and record them directly into Pro Tools which comes with the unit – and use exactly the same sounds/settings live at a gig. You can reamp sounds you've already recorded; there's a mic channel to record live instruments, vocals, or a mic'd favourite amp; there's a stereo effect loops so the unit becomes the hub for integrating existing stompboxes or multi-FX. And it's a MIDI interface so you can control external devices in a home studio or control the rack from a MIDI controller on stage. Blimey!

Back panel connections are well chosen, though we'd like to have seen the second amp socket on the front

Eleven Rack is a signal processor, modeller, emulator, reamper, MIDI interface, audio interface and more

At a core level Eleven Rack is based on the same software engine as the Avid/Digi Design Eleven Pro Tools plug-in. Locating this in a external unit adds input/output/routing flexibility, real world knobs and buttons and dedicated DSP (Digital Signal Processing) power which reduced monitoring latency and frees up your CPU for other tasks.

From the full-size control knobs to the on/off toggle switch, everything feels amp-like and 'guitarist friendly'. Editing and parameter controls click with a reassuring positivity and the ➔

FACTFILE
Avid Eleven Rack

DESCRIPTION **Modelling guitar amp/effects processor, single channel mic pre, tuner and audio interface capabilities. Ships with Pro Tools 10 software**
PRICE **£759.99**

CONTROLS **Power, Volume, Rig Scroll, Edit/Back, Save, Volume, Treble, Middle, Drive, Master, Effects bypass (X7), Mic Gain, Phantom Power, Pad**

CONNECTIONS **Guitar input, mic input, line input, digital 1/O, output to amp, two main outputs, USB, stereo FX loop, expression pedal, MIDI I/O**

AMPS **'59 Tweed Lux, '59 Tweed Bass, '64 Black Panel Lux Vibrato/Normal, '66 AC Hi Boost, '67 Black Duo, '69 Plexiglas, '82 Lead 800, '85 M-2 Lead, '89 SL-100 Drive/Crunch, '92 Treadplate Modern/Vintage High Gain, Avid DC Modern Overdrive, Avid DC Vintage Crunch**

EFFECTS, SOUND PROCESSORS AND UTILITIES **BBD Delay, Black Op Distortion, Black Wah, C1 Chorus/ Vibrato, Eleven SR Stereo Reverb, EP Tape Echo, Avid Custom Flanger, Avid Graphic EQ, Green JRC Overdrive, Gray Compressor, Orange Phaser, Avid Roto Speaker, Shine Wah, Spring Reverb, Tri Knob Fuzz, Avid guitar tuner, Vibe Phaser, Avid Volume Pedal**

SPEAKER CABINETS **4x12 Classic 30, 4x12 Green 25W, 4x10 Tweed Bass, 2x12 AC Blue, 2x12 Black Duo, 1x12 Black Lux, 1x12 Tweed Lux**

MICROPHONES **Dyn 7, Dyn 57, Dyn 409, Dyn 421, Cond 67, Cond 87, Ribbon 121**

CONTACT **Avid UK**
01753 655 999
www.avid.com

inclusion of dedicated bypass switches for each effect type is sensibly hands-on. Putting the guitar input, mic input, headphone socket and output to amp socket on the front is practical: many day-to-day operations can be achieved without a trip round the back. All the other rear connections – for hooking up to monitors or a PA, computer (USB and digital I/O), external effects, MIDI keyboard and floor controller – are the type you are likely to leave configured in the home studio or set up as part of general live rigging.

Sounds

There are 104 Eleven Rack presets (or 'rigs') and 104 factory defaults, copied directly into a further 104 user-editable locations. Each rig is a signal processor chain running from through eight FX modules, an amp model and the external FX loop. The location of all the modules and the loop can be changed to suit, and amps, cabs and mic models exchanged.

The manual is an easy read and the unit is simple to get on with. It's even easier when the unit is connected to Pro Tools, as every parameter is displayed in a window where the graphics emulate the style of the original analogue equipment. You can use your mouse or the buttons on the Eleven Rack to change values and drag-and-drop modules to different locations in the chain.

The basic Eleven Rack isn't over-stuffed with novelty sounds, but the Avid techs have assembled a good selection of the most sought-after gear of the last 50 years: think Marshall, Vox, Boogie, Fender and Soldano amps, Ibanez, Ross, Vox, Electro-Harmonix, Maestro and Boss effects. There are 12 amps and 17 effects: chorus, distortion, delay – all the usual suspects. You can purchase an Expansion Pack for just

Quality-feeling controls: all the everyday inputs are located on the front panel

Switch on the cabinet and microphone modelling and it's hard to believe you aren't plugged into the real deal

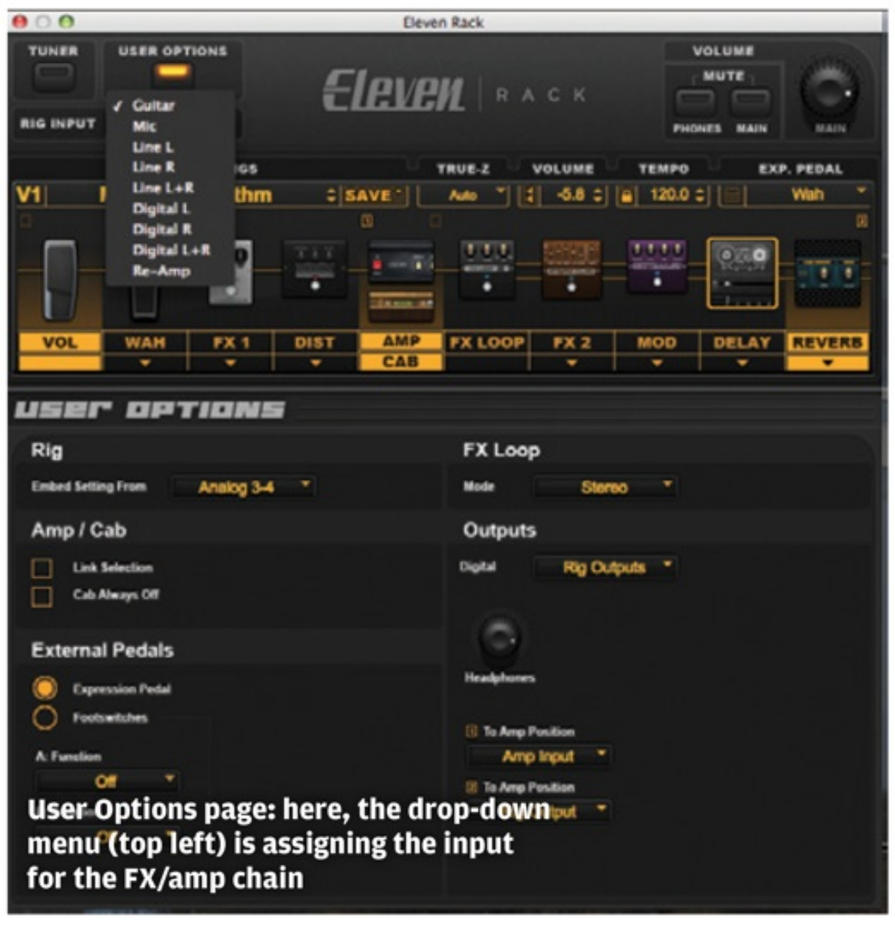
£64 to add a further 15 amp models, six effects and eight speaker cabs to add to the seven already there.

Through a process of 'tone cloning' the kit has been 'dismantled' and the entire signal path recreated in order to capture the details that lead to the tone and feel of the original. A real-time convolution engine has been used to recreate speakers and mics, and a pro engineer was employed to ensure that mic'ing techniques were authentic. Many past modellers have created accurate sounds, but playing feel has lacked credibility: here the hook-up between guitar and models has been re-engineered with an analogue input circuit that recreates the input impedance of the pedals and amps.

The results are impressive, to say the least. The presets vary from practical cleans to monster leads and a number of whacked-out modulation/delay patches. Switch off the cab and mic modelling and you have what feels like an emulation; switch them on, and it's hard to believe you aren't plugged into the real deal. Everything from modelled rectifier sag to adjustable speaker cone break-up plays its part. Playing through monitors or headphones leaves something to be desired, but stand next to a neutral power amp and a cab and the authenticity leaps forward with trouser-flapping credibility. A guitarist in a covers band could set up totally different rigs for every song!

For the aficionado there are limits, of course. The Vox model may sound like an AC30 but it doesn't sound exactly like my AC30, and you can't blend channels. However, there's nothing to stop you integrating a favourite amp. All the amp models are great, but we'd like a few Hiwatt, Orange and Peavey models. A few esoteric pedals would also be good.

Click on any effect unit in the chain and it appears, life-sized and ready to tweak



User Options page: here, the drop-down menu (top left) is assigning the input for the FX/amp chain

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In the studio

There are two ways to use Eleven Rack in the studio: as an external processor/preamp with an existing Pro Tools system, or as your primary audio interface. Though we're now onto version 10 of Pro Tools, the unit interfaced seamlessly with a Legacy LE 8.0.4 system where an appropriate driver is already in place (with Pro Tools versions 9 and 10 you have to install a separate driver). When used as an external device, Eleven Rack can facilitate simultaneous recording of wet and dry versions of your performance (as a mono track and a stereo pair) and the Pro Tools control window is fully functional. However, you can't use the dedicated reamping function – although there is a work-around, because the unit can be inserted into the signal path in the same way as any other outboard when there are accessible sends and returns.

The principle limitation of using Eleven Rack as your main interface is its simultaneous input capability, and calling it an eight-channel input device is somewhat misleading. This is only an issue if you want to record multitrack live performances and in fairness, Eleven Rack isn't designed to be all things to all people. Still, you can record your dry guitar signal, the stereo output from the processor (treated dry guitar), a stereo line level pair (or two mono sources), the mic pre input and a digital stereo pair at the same time: that's a maximum of four analogue sources. So you could, for example, record electric guitar, a vocal, a second guitar, a bass (using the line inputs with external preamps) and digital keyboards/drums. The addition of a good twin-channel mic pre will make this set up much more flexible, as you can use more than one mic for external reamping and for general stereo recording using the line inputs. For the price, Eleven Rack will be more than adequate for the majority of guitar-oriented project studios.

Being able to record both dry and processed versions of your sound is excellent. It means you can tweak the tone and try different rigs in the studio, double the original using different amps or effects, EQ and blend a dry signal with the effected to add definition, or use the waveform as a clear visual guide for editing/comping. You can also embed all the rig settings inside the recorded audio file – so months after you've forgotten which sound you used you can go back, automatically load it back into Eleven Rack and do perfectly matched drop-ins or re-perform a part.

Reamping is as simple as sending the dry signal to Eleven Rack and recording the wet solution on a separate track. This is all done in digital domain, so there's no signal degradation. For further flexibility you can send the dry signal out to an amp and reamp via the mic input if you want to move some real air and capture natural reverberations.

FINAL SCORE

AVID ELEVEN RACK	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**88%**

Verdict

If you're into home recording, tweaking your sound and effects and playing venues where your monitor and PA sound could be better managed, Eleven Rack is basically a Swiss army knife in a box. If you consider that Pro Tools 10 on its own costs £538 and the Eleven plug-in £449, buying Eleven Rack actually saves you £228 on the deal... and it gives you a free audio interface and dedicated DSP-accelerated guitar input device! That's absurdly good value for anyone just entering the world of home studios or someone upgrading from an older computer system, and it's way more guitar-oriented than the basic Mbox/Pro Tools combo for £809. For the price, this is an excellent-sounding and extremely flexible guitar recording/live solution. The only way to improve on the sound is have access to classic amps, mics, preamps, a good sounding live room, the opportunity to play loud and the time to tweak. To get a similar result with any of the software emulators on the market you will need an outboard input preamp, but Eleven Rack offers a compete set-up.

As well as being an absurdly good deal, Eleven Rack is an excellent-sounding and flexible recording/live solution

While Eleven Rack can function with other digital recording software, full functionality does require a commitment to Pro Tools. If you're familiar with other programmes, migrating won't be a major challenge; it's extremely intuitive at a basic level and fully featured. If you're a beginner, there's no point in pretending that you don't have a steep learning curve ahead – but the creative reward and personal satisfaction of the journey will make it well worth your while.

Start up Pro Tools and this is the editing screen you automatically get – complete with Eleven Rack window

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Gibson Les Paul Studio Limited
Electric guitar
Les Paul model, carved top, mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 490R/498T AlNiCo humbuckers, tune-o-matic bridge, stopbar tailpiece, chrome hardware, includes original case.

Worn Brown
o. code 198816
€ 645.- £ 536.-
Worn Cherry
order code 225129
€ 645.- £ 536.-

Gibson SG Special 60's Tribute
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, mahogany neck with 60's slim taper profil, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 2 Gibson P-90 single-coils, 2 volume and 2 tone controls, used look finish, incl. gigbag.
Worn Satin Ebony
order code 260190
Worn Satin Cherry € 695.- £ 578.-
o. code 260192
Worn Satin Natural
order code 260193
€ 695.- £ 578.-

Godin 5th Avenue Kingpin
Archtop jazz guitar
Canadian wild cherry top/back/sides, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 631mm scale, 1x Godin P90 Kingpin single coil pickup, Graphtex TUSC bridge, floating pickguard, incl. case. Finish: Custom Polished French Finish Cognac Burst.

order code 209636
€ 735.- £ 611.-

ESP LTD EC-1000 Vintage Black
Electric guitar
LP style, mahogany body, 3pcs set mahogany neck, ebony fretboard, abalone flags inlays, gold hardware, Tone Pros T3B-T/T1Z locking bridge, binding, EMG 81 & 60 pickups, 1 toggle switch. Finish: Black Satin.

order code 192156
€ 935.- £ 777.-

Gibson Explorer '76
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 496R humbucker (neck) & 500T humbucker (bridge), 22 jumbo frets, white pickguard, chrome hardware, includes case. Finish: Ebony.

order code 104271
€ 1099.- £ 913.-

Gibson Les Paul Studio GH
Electric guitar
Les Paul model, mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, trapezoid inlays, 490R/498T Alnico humbuckers, tune-o-matic bridge, stop tailpiece, gold hardware, incl. original case. Finish: Ebony.

order code 143357
€ 1145.- £ 952.-

Gibson Les Paul Studio
Electric guitar
Les Paul model, mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 2x humbucker pickups, chrome hardware, incl. case.

Finish: Ebony
o. code 134274
€ 1145.- £ 952.-
Finish: Fireburst
order code 211278
€ 1145.- £ 952.-

Line6 James Tyler JTV-69 Variax
Electric modeling guitar
ST style, alder body, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 medium jumbo frets, dot inlays, Graph Tech TUSQ XL nut, stoptail bridge, wounded Alnico humbucker (bridge) and Vintage single-coils (neck and middle), 5-way toggle switch, finish: black, incl. padded gigbag, Line6 Workbench, power supply and Variax Workbench USB adapter.

order code 252063
€ 1245.- £ 1035.-

Fender 60th Anniversary Tele
Electric guitar
Limited Anniversary Edition, ash body, bolt-on maple neck with modern C shape, 22 frets, saddle width: 42.8mm, scale: 648mm, 2 American Standard Tele single-coils, 3-way switch, no load tone control, American tele bridge plate with brass steel saddles, finish: blackguard blonde, incl. case.

order code 259040
€ 1285.- £ 1068.-

Gibson Les Paul Studio Pro Plus
Electric guitar
European wide exclusive at Thomann, mahogany body, AA figured maple top, set mahogany neck, 60's Slim taper neck profil, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 490R and Burstbucker Pro humbucker (both coil split), Grover Kidney tuners, chrome hardware, incl. case.
Red Velvet
o. code 264310
€ 1290.- £ 1072.-
Transl. Black
order code 264311
€ 1290.- £ 1072.-

Fender American Deluxe Strat
Electric guitar
Alder body, maple neck with modern C shape, rosewood fretboard, 22 medium jumbo frets, 3 new noiseless N3 strat single coils, 5-way switch, 1 volume and 2 tone controls, Fender deluxe 2-point synchronized tremolo, 3-ply black pickguard, Fender deluxe locking tuners, finish: tungsten, incl. molded SKB case, cable and strap locks.

order code 244701
€ 1299.- £ 1079.-

Gibson SG '61 Reissue
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, set mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 629mm scale, trapeze inlays, chrome hardware, tune-o-matic bridge, stopbar tailpiece, 2x ‚57 Classic humbuckers, 2x volume &, 2x tone controls, 3-way toggle switch, includes case. Finish: Heritage Cherry

order code 132373
€ 1690.- £ 1404.-

Gibson Les Paul Traditional
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, carved maple top, set mahogany neck with rounded ‚50s profile, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 628mm scale, trapeze perloid inlays, '57 Classic (neck) & '57 Classic Plus (bridge) humbucker pickups, TonePro tuners, includes black snakeskin case. Finish: Ebony.

order code 214187
€ 1890.- £ 1571.-

Gibson SG Std. Reissue V.O.S.
Electric guitar
Original vintage specs, mahogany body, 60's mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, Burstbucker 1 & 2 humbuckers pickups, maestro tremolo, incl. Custom Shop case. Finish: Faded Cherry.

order code 193723
€ 2199.- £ 1827.-

Gibson Les Paul Standard 2008
Electric guitar
Mahogany body, AA grade figured maple top, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, 629mm scale, 43mm nut width, trapezoid inlays, 22 frets, 1x Burstbucker Pro 2 (bridge) & 1x Burstbucker Pro 1 (neck), TonePros locking bridge and string holder, Grover locking machine heads, incl. black snakeskin case. Finish: Heritage Cherry Sunburst.

order code 214842
€ 2333.- £ 1939.-

Gretsch G6128T-TVP Power Jet
Electric guitar
Arched laminated maple top, semi-hollow one-piece mahogany body, ebony fretboard, 22 frets, 2x TV Jones PowerTron pickups, pinned rosewood based adjust-o-matic bridge, Gretsch Bigsby B3C vibrato tailpiece, chrome hardware, incl. G6238 deluxe hardshell case. Finish: Black.

order code 190926
€ 2399.- £ 1994.-

Gibson ES-335 BE
Semiacoustic guitar
Maple body, birdseye maple top, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, scale: 629mm, 22 frets, saddle width: 42,8mm, 2 '57 Classic humbuckers, Grover Kidney tuners, tune-o-matic bridge, nickel hardware, finish: natural, incl. case.

order code 267720
€ 2690.- £ 2235.-

Fender David Gilmour NOS
Electric guitar
Custom artist signature model, comfort contoured alder body, maple neck with „Thin Skin" dark tint nitrocellulose lacquer, maple fretboard, 21 vintage frets, CS Fat 50 (neck), CS 69 (mid) and Seymour Duncan SSL5 (bridge) single-coils, 5-way switch, incl. case and certificate of authenticity. Finish: New Old Stock Black.

order code 215713
€ 2969.- £ 2467.-

Gibson Firebird-X
Electric guitar
Ash body, maple neck, RoboHead tuners, TOM bridge/Piezo robot guitar, stop bar robot tailpiece, pickups: FBX Alnico II, FBX Ceramic and FBX Alnico V, 5-way-switch, incl. case, 2x foot controller, battery, Ableton Live and Guitar Rig 4 Pro.

Finish: Blue-volution
order code 257297
Finish: Red-volution
order code 257296
€ 3390.- £ 2817.-

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Telephone Hotline: 0203 5141643 (UK)
Fax: +49 9546 9223-24

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Fender Squier SA-105 CE
Acoustic guitar
Dreadnought with cutaway, laminated spruce top, back and sides laminated nato, nato neck, rosewood fretboard, scale: 643mm, Fishman Isys-T pickup system.
Finish: Black
order code 268336
Finish: Natural
order code 268342
Finish: Sunburst
order code 268344
€ 99.- £ 82.-

Fender CD-60
Acoustic guitar
Laminated spruce top, back and sides laminated mahogany, nato neck, sonokeling fretboard, scale: 643mm, saddle width: 43mm.
Black
o. code 190654
€ 109.- £ 91.-
Natural
o. code 190655
€ 109.- £ 91.-
Sunburst
o. code 190656
€ 109.- £ 91.-

Harley Benton JC503CEQ
Acoustic guitar
Jumbo style, cutaway, solid spruce top, rosewood back & sides, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, block inlays, piezo pickup system with 4-band EQ preamp. Finish: Natural High Polish
order code 187498
€ 149.- £ 124.-

Fender CD-60 CE
Acoustic guitar
Dreadnought, cutaway, laminated spruce top, nato back and sides, nato neck, sonokeling fretboard, active Fender FTE3-TN preamp with volume/bass/mid/treble controls, built-in tuner.
Finish: Black
o. code 190659
€ 175.- £ 145.-
Finish: Natural
o. code 190658
€ 175.- £ 145.-
Finish: Sunburst
order code 190657
€ 175.- £ 145.-

Takamine EG440SC
Acoustic guitar
NEX body with cutaway, solid spruce top, laminated mahogany back and sides, pickup with TP4T preamp system, finish: natural.
order code 198096
€ 311.- £ 258.-

Yamaha APX500II
Acoustic guitar
Cutaway, maple top, nato back and sides, ivory binding, black headstock, nato neck, fretboard rosewood, dot inlays, rosewood bridge, 22 frets, scale: 634mm, saddle width: 43mm, preamp „System 65“, piezo pickup, machine heads Yamaha die-cast chrome (TM-29-T), finish: black.
order code 259580
€ 325.- £ 270.-

Fender Jimmy Dale Signature Kingman SCE
Acoustic guitar
Cutaway, solid mahogany top, ‘C‘ shaped maple neck, rosewood fretboard, block inlays, bone nut, scale: 642mm, nut width: 42mm, 20 frets, Fishman Presys pickup system and active on-board preamp with tuner, incl. case. Finish: Natural.
order code 241210
€ 462.- £ 384.-

Martin Guitars D-1 GT
Acoustic guitar
Dreadnought model, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid sapele, modified hybrid X scalloped bracing, stratabond neck, rosewood fretboard, 20 frets, scale: 645mm, saddle width: 43mm, incl. case, finish: natural gloss top.
order code 261819
€ 877.- £ 729.-

Martin D-16GT
Acoustic guitar
Solid Sitka spruce top, solid mahogany back & sides, select hardwood neck, black micarta fretboard and bridge, 20 frets (14 clear), chrome tuners, includes hardshell case. Finish: Natural High Gloss
order code 142158
€ 1085.- £ 902.-

Martin Guitars D-16RGT
Acoustic guitar
Solid spruce top, rosewood back and sides, solid east Indian rosewood bridge and fretboard, 20 frets (14 clear), nut width: 43mm, chrome tuners, incl. hardshell case, high gloss finish.
order code 235615
€ 1179.- £ 980.-

Fender American Kingman USA Select LTD
Acoustic guitar
Limited 150pcs worldwide, solid Engelman spruce top, solid mahogany back and sides, body binding aged white, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, Fishman Sonitone pickup system, finish: sunburst, incl. case, leather strap and certificate of authenticity.
order code 273759
€ 1699.- £ 1412.-

Martin Guitars GPCPA3
Acoustic guitar
Grand performance, cutaway, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid rosewood, black richlite fretboard, 20 frets, black richlite bridge performing artist belly, chrome tuners, Delmar tortoise pickguard, Fishman F1 Aura pickup system, finish: natural, incl. case.
order code 256133
€ 1755.- £ 1458.-

Martin Guitars DCPA3
Acoustic guitar
Cutaway model, solid sitka spruce top, solid rosewood back and sides, black richlite fretboard, 20 frets, scale: 645mm, nut width: 44.45mm, black richlite bridge, chrome tuners, Delmar tortoise pickguard, Fishman F1 Aura pickup system, incl. 345PA hardshell brown case. Finish: Natural.
order code 256132
€ 1859.- £ 1545.-

Martin D-28
Acoustic guitar
The classic dreadnought model, solid Sitka spruce top, solid East Indian rosewood back & sides, solid mahogany neck, solid ebony fretboard, 20 frets (14 clear), solid ebony bridge, includes case. Finish: Natural
order code 150353
€ 1955.- £ 1625.-

Takamine TNV460SC
Acoustic guitar
NEX body with cutaway, solid bear claw spruce top, solid Indian rosewood back & sides, ebony fretboard, snowflake inlays, CTP-1 Cool Tube preamp, gold tuners, abalone rosette, includes case. Finish: Natural High Gloss
order code 175766
€ 2066.- £ 1717.-

Maton EBG808
Acoustic guitar
Tommy Emmanuel signature, orchestra model, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid queensland maple, queensland maple neck, rosewood fretboard, scale: 650mm, saddle width: 44,1mm, Maton APMic pickup system, finish: natural satin. Made in Australia.
order code 239744
€ 2399.- £ 1994.-

Gibson SJ-200 Standard
Acoustic guitar
New edition modern classic, handmade, solid sitka spruce top, back and sides solid eastern curly maple, maple neck, rosewood fretboard, crown inlays, 20 frets, active Aura Ellipse electronics with soundhole-mounted volume control, includes case, finish: vintage sunburst V.O.S.
order code 185825
€ 3090.- £ 2568.-

Martin Guitars OMJM John Mayer
Acoustic guitar
John Mayer signature model, 000-45 style, solid Engelmann spruce top, solid indian rosewood back and sides, ebony fretboard, Martin Gold Plus Natural 1 pickup system, incl. 533 Geib style case. Finish: Natural.
order code 109994
€ 3199.- £ 2658.-

Martin Guitars J12-40E Special
Acoustic guitar
Jumbo, solid Sitka spruce top, solid East Indian rosewood back & sides, ebony fretboard, 20 frets, solid east indian rosewood headstock with C.F. Martin abalone pearl inlay, modified low oval neck shape, bone nut, solid ebony bridge, gold enclosed tuners, incl. case. Finish: natural high-gloss with aging toner.
order code 248610
€ 3699.- £ 3074.-

Gibson Western Classic Prewar 200
Acoustic guitar
Super jumbo model, AAA-grade sitka spruce top, back and sides AAA-grade Madagascar rosewood, hand-scalloped bracing, fretboard ebony, gold waverly tuners, historic flower pot peghead inlay, finish: vintage Sunburst Nitrocellulose, incl. case.
order code 237840
€ 4399.- £ 3656.-

Ibanez GSRM20-BK
4-string bass guitar
Mahogany body, maple neck, 22 frets, rosewood fretboard, B10 bridge, pickup P/J style, short scale: 726mm (28.6“), finish: black, incl. gigbag and strap.
order code 236793
€ 185.- £ 154.-

Höfner Ignition Beatles Bass
4-string bass guitar
Hollow maple body, spruce top, rosewood fretboard, 22 frets, 2x Höfner humbucking pickups, nickel hardware, rhythm/solo-switch, control plate with 2 volume controls.
Vintage Sunburst
order code 232784
Black
order code 232783
€ 244.- £ 203.-
Vintage Sunb./lefthanded
order code 232785
€ 244.- £ 203.-

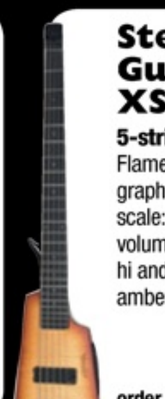
Ibanez SR305-IPT
5-string bass guitar
Soundgear series, agathis body, 5-pcs maple/rosewood „SR5“ neck, 24 medium frets, rosewood fretboard, Pearl Dot inlays, B105 bridge, cosmo black hardware, EXF-4F Ibanez pickup (neck) and EXF-4R Ibanez pickup (bridge), Stylesweeper 3-band EQ electronic, incl. gigbag and strap. Finish: Iron Pewter.
order code 202684
€ 329.- £ 273.-

Fender Std. Jazz Bass MN 2011
4-string bass guitar
Made in Mexico, alder body, modern C shape maple neck, maple fretboard, 20 frets, 2 standard J-bass single coils, standard vintage style bridge, scale: 864mm (long scale), saddle width: 38mm. Finish: Black high-gloss.
order code 271345
€ 599.- £ 498.-

Fender Roger Waters Precision
Signature bass guitar
Alder body, bolt-on maple neck, thick „C“ shape, 20 medium frets, Seymour Duncan basslines SPB-3 quarter pund single-coil P-bass pickup, chrome/black hardware, machined brass saddle, vintage 70´s fender tuners, black standard 4-saddle bridge, black pickguard, finish: black, incl. deluxe gigbag.
order code 254767
€ 679.- £ 564.-

Fender ‘50s Precision Bass
4-string bass guitar
Classic series, alder body, 1-piece maple neck with C-shape, 20 vintage style frets, 1 Precision bass split single-coil, American Vintage Precision bass bridge, vintage style reverse tuners, nickel/chrome hardware, gold anodized aluminium pickguard, scale 864mm (34“), incl. deluxe gigbag. Finish: 2-Tone Sunburst.
order code 185299
€ 755.- £ 627.-

Fender ‘70s Classic Jazz Bass
4-string bass guitar
Classic series, alder body, maple neck with ‘70s C shape, rosewood fretboard, 20 vintage style frets, scale: 864mm (34”), saddle width: 38mm (1.50”), 2 vintage style Jazz Bass single-coils with AlNiCo magnets, incl. deluxe gigbag, finish: 3-tone sunburst.
order code 212976
€ 775.- £ 644.-



Steinberger Guitars Synapse XS-15FPA Custom
5-string headless bass guitar
Flamed maple body, set CybroSonic graphite neck, phenolic fretboard, 24 frets, scale: 34“, 2x EMG-40-P5 active pickups, volume control, mag/piezo PU blend, active hi and lo cut/boost, finish: translucent amber, incl. gigbag.
order code 258933
€ 819.- £ 681.-

Gibson Les Paul Oversized Bass
4-string bass guitar
Mahogany body, maple top, mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard, scale: 864mm, 2 TB+ ceramic pickups, Grover bass tuners, 2 volume and 2 tone controls, chrome hardware, incl. Gibson hardshell case.
Gold Top
o. code 264350
€ 1290.- £ 1072.-
H. Cherry Sunburst
order code 264351
€ 1390.- £ 1155.-

Sandberg California TM4
4-string bass guitar
Ash body, maple neck, rosewood fretboard with block inlays, chrome hardware, pearl white pickguard, 1 Delano J-Style pickup and 1 power humbucker, Sandberg 2-band EQ, active/passive switchable, finish: satin blueburst, incl. gigbag.
order code 221894
€ 1350.- £ 1122.-

Fender American Deluxe J-Bass V
5-string bass guitar
Ash body, modern C-shape maple neck, rosewood fretboard, 21 frets, 2x new N3 noiseless pickups, volume, pan pot, treble boost/cut, midrange boost/cut, bass boost/cut, active/passive mini toggle switch, 3-ply black pickguard, Fender light weight vintage style tuners, finish: wine transparent, incl. SKB molded case, cable, strap and strap locks.
order code 246573
€ 1690.- £ 1404.-

Music Man Stingray 4
4-string bass guitar
Ash body, bolt-on maple neck, 1x Music Man pickup, electronics with 3-band EQ, black pickguard, includes case. Finish: Natural.
order code 181495
€ 1933.- £ 1606.-

Music Man Stingray 5
5-string bass guitar
Ash body, bolt-on maple neck, 3-band EQ, single and dummy coil pickups, serial/parallel pickup configurations, includes case. Finish: Black.
order code 103886
€ 1999.- £ 1661.-

Rickenbacker 4003 JG
4-string bass guitar
Maple body, neck-through-body maple neck with rosewood fretboard, triangle fret inlays, scale: 845mm (33 1/4“), 2 single-coils, Schaller Deluxe machine heads, 2 outputs (mono and stereo), includes case, finish: Jetglo (black).
order code 150711
€ 2222.- £ 1846.-

Sadowsky MV4-WL Will Lee
4-string bass guitar
Ash body, maple neck, maple fretboard, 22 frets, chrome hardware, D´tuner, Sadowsky J-style pickups, Sadowsky preamp with vintage tone control and midboost, incl. case, finish: black.
order code 257554
€ 2999.- £ 2492.-

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STRINGS

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168992	009 - 042	£ 0.79
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128237	009 - 042	£ 2.57
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128238	010 - 046	£ 2.57
132702	011 - 048	£ 2.78

Harley Benton

with extra E1 and B2 strings

156199	009 - 042	£ 2.77
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158969	011 - 050	£ 3.53
181291	012 - 052	£ 3.91

Dean Markley

104563	2502B 009 - 042	£ 3.16
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104565	2503B 010 - 046	£ 3.16
104564	2504B 010 - 052	£ 3.16

D´Addario EXL

104554	120 009 - 042	£ 3.69
101428	125 009 - 046	£ 3.45
104555	110 010 - 046	£ 3.69
131962	140 010 - 052	£ 4.15

Ernie Ball

104572	2223 009 - 042	£ 4.40
104570	2222 009 - 046	£ 4.40
104573	2221 010 - 046	£ 4.40

Elixir Nanoweb

152173	009 - 042	£ 9.10
152174	009 - 046	£ 9.10
152175	010 - 046	£ 8.70
152177	011 - 049	£ 9.-

Electric bass strings

156186	Warwick Red Label 040 - 100	£ 8.20
144460	Warwick Red Label 045 - 105	£ 8.20
147931	Warwick Red Label 040 - 130	£ 9.90
157147	Warwick Red Label 045 - 135	£ 11.10
140180	GHS 3045 M 045 - 105	£ 15.20
160651	GHS 3045 5M-DYB 045 - 130	£ 18.30
104535	Rotosound 045 - 105	£ 15.20
142786	Rotosound 045 - 130	£ 19.-
122057	Ernie Ball 045 - 100	£ 19.90
141174	Ernie Ball 045 - 105	£ 19.90
121135	Ernie Ball 045 - 130	£ 24.-
152178	Elixir Nanoweb 040 - 095	£ 35.-
171440	Elixir Nanoweb 045 - 100	£ 35.-
152179	Elixir Nanoweb 045 - 105	£ 35.-

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Thomann string winder

For faster string winding

order code 122787 — £ 1.20

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Guitar cleaner, 100ml, even for nitro lacquers

order code 196948 — £ 3.07

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Polish & cleaner for guitar and bass.

order code 141577 — £ 3.96

D'Andrea Lemon Oil

Cleaning oil, fretboard conditioner for guitar and bass

order code 150545 — £ 3.13

GHS Fast Fret

Fingerboard, string and neck cleaner, silicone free.

order code 104761 — £ 3.99

Lead Foot SB201

A/B switch for guitar and bass

order code 134241 — £ 15.20

GIGBAG & CASE

Thomann Economy

Standard model, large pocket for accessories, notes and strings, colour: black

145669	Classic	£ 7.90
178496	Western	£ 7.90
133671	Electric guitar	£ 7.90
142774	Electric bass	£ 7.90

Thomann Standard

20mm padding, bottom protector, black velvet lining, backbag straps.

121546	Classic	£ 14.40
130405	3/4 Classic	£ 14.40
121547	Western	£ 14.40
121548	Electric guitar	£ 14.40
157096	Flying V	£ 14.40
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142783	Jumbo	£ 23.-
121814	Acoustic bass	£ 24.-

Thomann Deluxe Profi

Gig bags with 30mm padding, 5cm wide padded straps, foldable backbag straps, 2 outside pockets, 2 additional accessory pockets.

142777	Electric guitar	£ 19.-
142775	Classic	£ 19.-
142776	Western	£ 19.-
142778	Electric bass	£ 19.-

Behringer V-Tone GMX110

Modeling guitar combo

30W analog modeling guitar amp with 2 channels, 27 modeling sounds, FX processor, tuner and MIDI control, weight: 11kg.

order code 167772 — € 88.- £ 73.-

Marshall MG30CFX

Guitar combo

30W, 1x 10" speaker, 4 channels (storable presets) with 3-band EQ, digital effects, digital reverb, headphone output, MP3/line in, dimenisons: WHD 48 x 42 x 22,5cm, weight: 10,8kg, finish: carbon kevlar.

o. code 270799 — € 159.- £ 132.-

Marshall MG15CF

15W, 1x 8", 2 channels.

order code 270764 — € 85.- £ 71.-

Vox VT40+

Modelling guitar combo

60W, 1x10" speaker, 33 amp models, 11 pedal effects, 11 modulation/delay types, 3 reverb types, 1 noise reduction, 99 program numbers, 8 user presets (2 banks with 4 channels), headphone/recording out, aux in, footswitch out, dimension WHD: 42,2 x 40,6 x 22,2cm, weight: 10,9kg, footswitch optional.

order code 253860 — € 189.- £ 157.-

Roland Cube-40XL

Electric guitar combo with amp modeling

40W, 10" custom speaker, 2 channels (+ 2 storable settings), 10 amp models, 8 effects, solo function, 3-band EQ, 80 sec. looper with endless overdubs, power squeezer, aux in, manual and chromatic tuner, 6 footswitch connections.

order code 254100 — € 198.- £ 165.-

Roland Cube-20XL

20", 8", 6 amp models

order code 254102 — € 148.- £ 123.-

Fender FM212R

Guitar combo

Frontman series, 100W, 2x 12" speakers, 3 channels (normal, drive and extra drive), FX loop, includes 2-way footswitch. Dimensions: 49.5 x 68.5 x 27cm. Weight: 21.7kg

order code 167017 — € 219.- £ 182.-

Bugera 6260-212

All valve guitar combo

120W, 2 channels, 2x 12" Bugera speaker, 4x 6L6 power valves (convertible to EL34), 5x 12AX7 preamp valves, reverb and presence control for each channel, impedance switch (4/8/16Ω), includes footswitch for channel and reverb. Dimensions: 51.9 x 68.8 x 24.8cm. Weight: 28.5kg.

order code 206768 — € 285.- £ 237.-

Line 6 Spider IV 75-112

Modeling guitar combo

75W, 1x12" speaker, 16 amp models, 64 programmable presets (with FBV shortboard), 400 presets (200 song-based, 200 from famous artists), LC display, FX processor with 6 different effects (4 simultaneous), built-in tuner, headphone/DI out with speaker simulation, CD/mp3 in (mini-jack), dimensions DWH: 26,4 x 50,5 x 45,7cm, weight: 15.5kg.

order code 231416 — € 289.- £ 240.-

Bugera 6262-212

All valve guitar combo

120W, 2x 12" Bugera speakers, 2 channels, 4x 6L6 power amp valves (convertible to EL34), 6x 12AX7 preamp tubes, reverb and presence controls per channel, impedance switch (4, 8 and 16Ω), includes reverb/channel footswitch. Dimensions: 51.8 x 68.8 x 24.8cm. Weight: 28.5kg.

order code 206034 — € 322.- £ 268.-

Bugera 333-212

All-valve guitar combo

120W, 2x 12" Bugera speakers, 3 channels, 4x 6L6 power valves, 4x 12AX7 preamp valves, separate 3-band EQ and reverb, damping switch, impedance switch, line output with level control, includes footswitch for channel and FX loop/boost. Dimensions: 51.8 x 68.7 x 24.7cm. Weight: 28.5kg.

order code 205592 — € 339.- £ 282.-

Vox AC30 C2

30W all-valve guitar combo

2x 12" Vox GSH12-30 speakers, 2 ins (boost & normal), input link-switch to combine both channels, volume, brilliance switch, boost volume, treble, EQ, standard/custom switch, bass, reverb, tremolo, tone cut, master volume, standby and power switch, outs for external speakers, output bias, FX loop, includes footswitch. Weight: 32kg

order code 180600 — € 858.- £ 713.-

Mesa Boogie Mark V 112 BK

Electric guitar combo

All valve, 1x12" C90 speaker, 3 channels, 5-band master EQ. Dimensions: 81 x 64 x 43.5cm (WxHxD). Weight: 37kg. Finish: Black

order code 224040 — € 2699.- £ 2243.-

Kustom KG100HFX Bundle

Halfstack consisting of:

KG100HFX guitar head: 2 channels, 3-band EQ, effects unit wit reverb/delay/chorus, solo boost (with optional footswitch order code 198735), FX loop, headphone output, aux input, speaker output, **Kustom KG412A guitar cab**, slanted version, 4x12" Kustom speakers, 120W, 4Ω, **incl. speaker cable.**

order code 258647 — € 288.- £ 239.-

Mesa Boogie Mini Rectifier Twenty-Five Top

All-tube guitar head

25/10W (switchable), 2 channels, 3-band EQ, presence and master for each channel adjustable, FX loop, 2x EL84 poweramp valves, 5x 12AX7 preamp valves, 2x speaker outs (jack) 8Ω/4Ω, incl. footswitch for A/B channel switching, incl. gigbag.

order code 270256 — € 1199.- £ 996.-

Kemper Profiling Amplifier

Guitar preamp

Allows you to take a precise sound snapshot of an existing amplifier setup including speaker cabinet and microphones, multiple stomp effect emulations (up to 4 simultaneously), master effects, EQ, and more, it is now possible for the first time to take a precise snapshot of your own amplifier sound.

order code 264341 — € 1399.- £ 1163.-

Engl Powerball II E645/2

All valve guitar head

100W, 6L6GC valves, 4 channels with 4 gain controls: clean gain1, crunch gain2, lead gain3 and lead gain4, 2 bottom sound switch for lead channel 3 and 4, 2 master volumes, adjustable effect loops, depth punch, 2 different lead sounds, adjustable noise gate on lead channel can now be activated via optional Z9 footswitch (order code 181665).

order code 242099 — € 1599.- £ 1329.-

Mesa Boogie Mark V Head

Full valve guitar head

3 channels, each channel with gain, master, treble, mid, bass and presence controls, each channel with 3 multi switches, 5-band master EQ, power amp valves: 4x 6L6.

order code 224041 — € 2490.- £ 2069.-

Gallien Krueger Backline 115 II

Bass combo

175W, 1x 15" speaker, 4-band EQ, 10dB pad, mute switch, gain & level controls, contour control, line output, headphone output

order code 156650 — € 249.- £ 207.-

Ashdown T15-250S

Bass combo

Thomann Special Edition, 1x 15" speaker, 250W, hi/low input. Controls: bass, lo mid, middle, hi mid, treble, deep and bright. FX loop, DI out, tuner out.

order code 227816 — € 285.- £ 237.-

Ampeg BA300/115

300W hybrid bass combo

1x15" speaker, HF horn with level control, 1x 12AX7 preamp valve, 3-band EQ, ultra high/low switches, integrated compressor, tube-driven line out (XLR/unbalanced jack) with level control, pre/post switch and ground lift, removable castors. Dimensions: 54 x 55 x 40.64cm. Weight: 27.5kg.

order code 119236 — € 477.- £ 396.-

tc electronic BG500/210

Transistor bass combo

500W (1000W Peak), 2x 10" + 1" Eminence TC custom drivers, SpectraComp, TubeTone, tweeter tone, 3 channel memories, bass tuner, instant EQ, balanced DI output, headphone output, dimensions WHD: 47,5 x 73,5 x 41cm, weight: 32kg.

order code 246076 — € 485.- £ 403.-

Ampeg BA300/210

300W hybrid bass combo

2x10" speaker, HF horn with level control, 12AX7 preamp tube, 3-band EQ, mid control style, ultra high/low switches, built-in compressor, pre/post switch and ground lift, removable casters, dimensions WHD: 53.98 x 54.61 x 40.64.cm, weight: 25.kg.

order code 206084 — € 522.- £ 434.-

Ashdown MAG 300H Bundle

Bass half stack

MAG300H bass head - 300W @ 4Ω, active and passive ins, VU meter. Controls: bass, low mid, mid, hi mid, treble, bright and deep switches. Post EQ balanced DI line/tuner out. Weight: 8.5kg. **MAG410T** bass cab - 4x 10" + tweeter, 350W @ 8Ω, 60Hz-20kHz. Weight: 28kg. **Includes speaker cable.**

order code 112500 — € 569.- £ 473.-

Ampeg BA600/115

600W hybrid bass combo

2x 12AX7 valve preamp, 600W, 1x 15" neodymium speakers, HF horn with level control, channel switching (vintage B15/modern), 3-band EQ, ultra hi/lo switches, compressor, line out, tube-driven bal. XLR and unbal. 1/4" out with level control, pre/post EQ switch and ground lift, FX loop. Weight: 27.5kg.

order code 206085 — € 619.- £ 514.-

Ampeg BA600/210

600W hybrid bass combo

2x 12AX7 valve preamp, 600W, 2x 10" neodymium speakers, HF horn with level control, channel switching (vintage B15/modern), 3-band EQ, ultra hi/lo switches, integrated compressor, line out, tube-driven balanced XLR and unbalanced 1/4" out with level control, pre/post EQ switch and ground lift, FX loop. Dimensions: 66 x 69 x 43cm. Weight: 27.5kg.

order code 202312 — € 619.- £ 514.-

Gallien Krueger 115MBE 200/4

Bass cabinet

200W/4Ω, 1x15" speaker + horn, max. SPL: 91dB, frequency response: 51Hz - 18kHz, outs 1x speakon and 1x jack, dimensions: 59.7 x 49.5 x 37.5cm, weight: 15kg.

o. code 264830 — € 139.- £ 116.-

Gallien Krueger 115MBX

200W/8Ω, 1x15" GK Paragon Ceramic speaker, tweeter, weight: 18,5kg. € 169.- £ 140.-

order code 243986

Hartke 410 TP

Bass cabinet

Transporter series 4x10" alu cone speaker, 300Watt, 8Ω, dimensions WHD: 61 x 61 x 38cm, weight: 32kg.

o. code 103794 — € 199.- £ 165.-

Hartke 115 TP

150W, 1x15", 23.13kg. € 149.- £ 124.-

order code 103793

Hartke 210 TP

150W, 2x10", 16.3kg. € 129.- £ 107.-

order code 200182

Kustom DE300 HD

Hybrid bass head

Tube preamp with 12AX7 valve, 300W RMS @ 4Ω, controls for bass, mids and treble, room EQ, organic clipping, preamp out, power amp in, DI output XLR, dimensions WHD: 58,4 x 26,7 x 29,2cm, weight: 16,3kg, designed in USA.

order code 229074 — € 259.- £ 215.-

Gallien Krueger 1001RB-II

Bass head

700W @ 4Ω, 460W @ 8Ω LF low & 50W high, 4/5-string preset, contour and presence controls, 4-band EQ, XLR DI out with ground lift and pre/post switch, FX loop, tuner out, mute switch. Dimensions: 19"/2U

order code 146973 — € 755.- £ 627.-

Gallien Krueger GT700RB-IV

480W + 75W @ 4Ω. € 589.- £ 489.-

order code 145612

www.thomann.de
Telephone Hotline: 0203 5141643 (UK)
Fax: +49 9546 9223-24

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the t.bone TWS16 GT
16-channel UHF wireless system
9.5" diversity receiver, GT guitar plug-on transmitter, 16 switchable frequencies (863.125 - 864.875MHz), 2 parallel systems, switchable squelch, XLR & jack out, external power supply, DC out for recharging transmitter. Includes 9.5" rackmount, 1m XLR-jack output cable.

order code 231529 € 107.- £ 89.-

Sennheiser Freeport Instrument
Diversity UHF wireless system
4 switchable frequencies between 863 - 865MHz, 10mW HF power, diversity receiver with LED for HF, diversity, peak, XLR & jack out, guitar bodypack with 1x 9V battery (up to 10hr). Includes 12V power supply and guitar cable.

order code 183507 € 158.- £ 131.-

Shure PG14E T10
UHF guitar/bass wireless system
PG1 handheld transmitter, 10 frequencies switchable (4 parallel), T10 frequency range (854-865MHz), pilot tone, mic/line switchable, 10mW HF power, 9.5" diversity receiver with internal antennas, audio and ready LEDs on receiver, channel display, XLR/jack out, powered via 9V battery. Includes WA302 guitar cable and power supply.

order code 109421 € 188.- £ 156.-

Line 6 Relay G50
Guitar & bass guitar wireless system
2.4GHz, 12 switchable frequencies, frequency response: 10Hz - 20kHz, 120dB max. SPL, up to 60m working distance, jack I/O, battery powered up to 8h, LED signal for status and battery health, switchable EQ presets to simulate different guitar cables, small and trendy housing, incl. batteries, cable and manual.

o. code 241990 € 399.- £ 332.-

Line 6 Relay G90 19" True Diversity Receiver, 2 outs for amp/tuner. € 635.- £ 528.-
order code 241999

Korg AW-2G
Chromatic clip-on tuner
Ultra-compact, ultra-lightweight, attaches to your wind or string instrument for easy and accurate tuning, piezo pickup detects vibrations directly from the instrument, integrated microphone, adjustable calibration (410 - 480Hz), tuning from A0 (27.5Hz) to C8 (4186Hz).

o. code 222775 € 27.- £ 22.-

Korg Pitchblack
Chromatic floor pedal tuner
LED display, 100% true bypass out, 4 display modes (full strobe, half strobe, meter & mirror), detection range from E0 to C8 (20,60Hz - 4186Hz), adjustable calibration (436 - 445Hz), 9V DC output jack for cascading the power supply to other pedals, black aluminium die-cast body, optional power supply available.

order code 207261 € 63.- £ 52.-

Electro Harmonix Big Muff PI USA Classic
Distortion/sustainer
True bypass, long creamy sustain, fat fuzz sound, solid treble and transparent bass sound à la Jimi Hendrix, Santana and Pink Floyd, power supply not included, made in USA.

order code 147853 € 63.- £ 52.-

Electro Harmonix Little Big Muff
Same silky smooth violin-like sustain and creamy tone. € 55.- £ 46.-
order code 191809

tc electronic PolyTune
Pedal tuner
Chromatic, calibration 435Hz to 445Hz, true bypass, simply strum all strings on your guitar or bass at once and it will immediately tell you which strings need tuning. Includes battery.

order code 242399 € 77.- £ 64.-

Boss TU-3
Chromatic floor tuner
Cent mode (like classical tuner) or stream mode, Accu Pitch, high brightness mode, flat tunings, mute or bypass, C0 (16,35Hz) - C8 (4.186Hz), also for 7-string guitars and 6-string basses, ±1 Cent, calibration 436 - 445 Hz, powered by 9V battery (included) or optional power supply, power for up to 7 additional FX pedals. Dimensions: 7.3 x 5.9 x 12.9cm. Weight: 390g.

order code 238909 € 79.- £ 66.-

Behringer FCB1010
MIDI foot controller with MIDI merge
10 banks with 10 presets each, special presets for Behringer amps, 2 expression pedals, simultaneous transmission of 5 MIDI program changes and 2 MIDI controllers per preset, MIDI note-on commands for trigger & tap tempo applications, 2 program relay control switch jack outputs (e.g. to select channels on any guitar amp), built-in power supply. Weight: 3.5kg

order code 149820 € 109.- £ 91.-

Harley Benton PB1000
Pedal board
For floor effects with aluminum case, velcro mounting area, incl. velcro tape and mounting material for optional power supply under the board, metal handle, chrome corners, dimensions: 60 x 40 x 11cm, weight (without case): 4,6kg.

order code 258092 € 122.- £ 101.-

Boss DD-7
Digital delay
6.4sec delay time, 40sec loop function, modulation echo with chorus, modeling of the classic DM-2, tap tempo via optional footswitch or continuous adjustment via optional expression pedal, stereo in/out, power supply optional.

order code 207482 € 138.- £ 115.-

tc electronic Flashback
Delay/looper stompbox
Mono/stereo I/O, delay, feedback and FX-level control, 10 different delay settings, audio tapping, USB connection for exchanging TonePrint settings and software updates, true bypass, power supply or battery (both not included).

order code 259463 € 139.- £ 116.-

Boss ME-25 Bundle
Guitar FX pedal
24bit, 60 presets, OD/DS solo function, easy edit function, 5 real time controller, ME-25 DVD-ROM, to use with included 6 AA batteries or optional power supply, weight: 1,9kg, dimensions WDH: 30 x 19,1 x 7,2cm. **Bundle incl. the sssnake GKP6 cable.**

order code 253474 € 148.- £ 123.-

Zoom G3
FX unit & guitar audio interface
3 big LCD displays and footswitches, authentic modeling for amps, cabinets and microphones, more than 100 DSP effects, up to 100 presets, drum computer, tuner, looper function with 40 sec. phrase recording and overdubbing, USB audio interface (USB powered and compliant to Mac and PC), incl. edit & share, Cubase LE and power supply.

order code 263002 € 169.- £ 140.-

Voodoo Lab Pedal Power 2 Plus
Universal power supply
For all battery operated guitar pedals, 4x 9/12V/100mA, 2x 9V/250mA, 2x 9V/100mA or combination of several outputs for 18V or 24V, each output is complete isolated & short circuit protected, regulated and highly filtered, incl. cables and detachable AC power cable.

order code 205981 € 173.- £ 144.-

Digitech JamMan Solo
Looper/phrase sampler
Store over 35 minutes of mono CD quality loops in 99 internal memories, optional SDHC card can store over 16 hours (with optional 8GB or higher SDHC memory card), 44.1kHz sampling rate (CD quality), USB, aux input, incl. power supply.

order code 243155 € 175.- £ 145.-

Boss RC-3
Loop station
Massive internal memory with up to three hours of stereo recording time, 99 on-board memories for storing loops, USB 2.0 port allows you to connect to a PC and import/export WAV audio, rhythm guide with real drums, runs on a single 9V battery (included) or optional AC power supply (order code 108096).

order code 259315 € 177.- £ 147.-

Boss ME-70
Multi FX pedal & preamp
Manual mode, memory mode, 18 banks of 4 patches, preamp with 6 amp models, 4 effect groups with on/off footswitch, 40sec looper, expression pedal with 6 functions, reverb, noise supressor, tuner, aux in, powered via battery or optional 9V power supply.

order code 222795 € 238.- £ 198.-

Digitech JamMan Stereo
Looper / phrase sampler
Store over 35 minutes of mono, CD quality loops in 99 internal memories, SD card slot, 44.1kHz sample rate, USB port, record rhythm loops and solo over them on the fly, completely hands-free, aux in, reverse playback, 4 heavy-duty metal footswitches, 3 stop modes, balanced XLR mic in, metronome, automatic recording, includes power supply.

o. code 243160 € 244.- £ 203.-

Vox ToneLab EX
Guitar preamp
Original Vox ValveReactor™ with 12AX7 valve, 200 professional created programs, 100 user programs, 100 factory presets, incl. 50 song presets, 33 amp models, 11 cabinet models, 45 premium effects, 11 distortion pedals, 15 floorpedal effects, 11 modulation effects, 4 delay effect types, 3 reverb types, 1 noise reduction, dimensions: WHD: 39,4 x 23,8 x 7,2cm, weight: 3kg, incl. power supply.

order code 257611 € 266.- £ 221.-

Boss RC-30 PowerSet
Dual track looper
Twin pedal multitrack looper with true stereo I/O, 2 synchronized stereo tracks, massive internal memory with up to three hours of stereo recording time, 99 on-board memory phrases for storing loops, built-in effects for processing loops, USB 2.0, rhythm guide with real drums, runs on batteries or optional AC power supply. **Bundle incl. Boss (Roland) PSA 230S power supply.**

order code 259329 € 277.- £ 230.-

Boss JS-8 eBand
Audio interface, preamp und recorder
39 amp models for guitar and bass, audio player with 4000 songs, mic input with 4 modeling effects, 300 audio loop phrases on-board for backing tracks and rhythms, 40 sec. looper with overdubs, 24bit/44,1kHz, incl. power supply, SD card, dimensions WDH: 26,4 x 16,6 x 20,1cm, weight: 1,7kg.

order code 235701 € 318.- £ 264.-

Boss GT-10 bundle
Guitar FX processor and preamp
400 presets (200 factory, 200 user), 13 simultaneous FX blocks, 2 WSP chips, SB Audio MIDI interface, 2 freely assignable control footswitches, amp switch connector, FX loop, Boss 40sec looper. Dimensions: 54.2 x 27.2 x 7.7cm (WxDxH). Weight: 4.7kg. **Bundle includes Thomann FX pedal bag.**

order code 210357 € 458.- £ 381.-

Boss RC-300
Loop station
3 stereo tracks each with 2 separate foot switches, volume fader for each track, expression pedal for effect control in real time, 3 hours stereo recording time and 99 internal user presets, 16 optimized effects, XLR mic in with phantom power, USB connection for import & export of WAV data files, dimensions WxDxH: 53.6 x 23.1 x 7.6cm, weight: 3.9kg, incl. power supply.

order code 270951 € 468.- £ 389.-

Line6 POD HD500 Bundle
Guitar FX
16 amp, 16 cabinet and 100 effect models, 48sec. looper, pitch shifter, effects pre/post switchable, effect loop, aux in, XLR mic in, CD/MP3 in, Variax and USB (10 audio channels), headphone out, 128 user programs and 512 factory presets, MIDI in/out/thru, dimensions WHD: 55 x 8 x 27cm. **Bundle incl. Thomann gigbag.**

order code 254915 € 489.- £ 406.-

Roland GR-55GK
Guitar synth + modeling
910 editable Roland synthesizer sounds, complete modeling-soundchain (guitar/bass/synth/effects/amps) out of VG-99 incl. virtual tuning, 2 synth sounds and the modeling sound can be combined, 270 preset sounds, 297 storage spaces, 20-second looper with endless overdubbing, USB interface for audio and MIDI, incl. power supply, GK-3 pickup and 5m GK cable, weight: 3.3kg.

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Guitar recording and effect system
True-Z auto-impedance guitar input, classic amp and stompbox sounds, effects processors in studio-quality, convolution based microphone emulations, integrated FX-loop, Tuner, tempo tap, USB 2.0, supports up to 8 simultaneous channels of high-resolution recording (up to 24bit/96kHz), AES/EBU and S/PDIF digital I/O, MIDI I/O, incl. ProTools 10 (download version) and iLok.

order code 272823 € 759.- £ 631.-

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Nylon picks
149397 Thin
149398 Medium
149399 Heavy
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Harley Benton
Professional perloid picks
149393 Thin
149394 Medium
149395 Heavy
149396 Extra Heavy
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for head stock, can be clipped between 2 strings, for 2 picks
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ACCESSORIES

the sssnake cables

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128550	IPP1060, 6m	£ 2.78
157995	GPK3, 3m	£ 3.99
157996	GPK6, 6m	£ 5.50
158874	GPK9, 9m	£ 7.10
166775	textile coated cable, 6m	£ 6.30
163864	WPP1060, 4m, helix cable	£ 5.50

Cordial cables

104967	Cordial CTI3PP, 3m	£ 8.70
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Harley Benton GTI
Electronic tuning tone, with a push of a button all 6 guitar notes (E, A, D, G, H, E) via built-in speaker, practical key ring format
order code 159508 £ 2.30

Thomann CTK-10
Chromatic tuner as keyring, tuning by built-in microphone, pitch range: 440 Hz, detection accuracy: +-0,5 cent, incl. battery
order code 228420 £ 3.13

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9V DC, 300mA, for Ibanez, Boss or Behringer floor effects.
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122806	Seymour Duncan SH-4 black	£ 64.-
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Open coil humbucker, vintage sound, for bridge position, individual pole pieces for high definition
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High-quality replacement tubes for all kinds of amplifiers or combos

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133444	12AX7 WA	£ 7.90
133445	12AX7 EH	£ 9.60

Jim Dunlop Bottlenecks

101824	202, Regular wall, medium	£ 3.20
101827	215, Heavy wall, medium	£ 4.74
125351	213, Heavy wall, large	£ 4.74

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The capo that most professionals use, perfect solution for all guitar players.

121652	C1 for electric and acoustic	£ 12.40
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103239	C3 for 12-string western	£ 12.70
128426	C4 for round fretboards	£ 12.40

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Acoustic/Electric capo for 6-string steel string acoustic guitar, electric guitar or electric bass, no trimming, curved
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9V alkaline block, cadmium free
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156626	9V NiMH, 270mAh	£ 11.10
132764	1,5V NiMH / AA, 2200mAh	£ 3.13

MARINER
Cutter Parlour & Eunoia-OM

Mariner's Chinese-made Green Series guitars are setting out to satisfy the eco-conscious with solid sustainable timbers like paulownia, sonokeling, nato, maple and sitka spruce. Review by **Jerry Uwins**

FACTFILE
Mariner Cutter

DESCRIPTION: **Parlour acoustic. Made in China**
PRICE: **£325**

BUILD: **Solid cedar top, solid paulownia back and sides. Nato neck with 18-fret bound sonokeling fingerboard. Sonokeling bridge, bone nut and saddle, chrome Kluson-style tuners, bottom strap button**
OPTIONS: **None**
LEFT-HANDERS: **Not at present**
FINISH: **Gloss natural body, satin neck**

SCALE LENGTH: **618mm/24.3"**
NECK WIDTH:
Nut 45mm
12th fret 56mm
DEPTH OF NECK:
First fret 20mm
Eighth fret 23mm
STRING SPACING:
Nut 38mm
Bridge 55mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED:
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 2.6mm
MAX RIM DEPTH: **90mm**
MAX BODY WIDTH: **309mm**
FINGERBOARD RADIUS: **16"**
WEIGHT: **1.48kg/3.25lb**

CONTACT **Mariner Guitars**
07710 842989
www.marinerguitars.com

Mariner, the venture of ex-Peavey Europe boss Ken Achard, has restructured its entire catalogue. Out go the Mastheads, Archives and Esos; in comes a full Green Series line-up, the first couple of which were introduced in early 2010. Now embracing nine models covering dreadnought, jumbo, auditorium, OM and parlour designs, their thrust, as the name suggests, is all about using sustainable timbers.

Key among these are backs and sides of paulownia, a fast-growing, self-regenerating, plantation-farmed wood indigenous to China. Generally a honey blonde with some darker striping, it's highly resistant to shrinkage and cracking, is easy to work with and light in weight. Tonal properties, meanwhile, are said to be not dissimilar to mahogany. Other ecologically-minded elements include fingerboards, bridges and headstock overlays of sonokeling, a sustainably managed south-east Asian species of rosewood; and readily available, mahogany-like nato for the necks. Other non-endangered components completing the recipe are cedar or spruce tops, maple bindings and bone nuts and saddles. All Mariner Green Series instruments are solid woods throughout.

Slotted headstock with Kluson-type tuners

Sweet-sized body with a 12-fret neck

This is a blueser's parlour – not the choice for serenading your sweetheart with a ballad, but brash and bright

Cutter

The sole parlour within the series, the Cutter is very much a compact, old-school design, sveltely profiled at just over 12" across the lower bouts, and 12 frets to the body with a short 618mm scale length, slot headstock and pyramid bar bridge. Maximum rim depth is a reasonably proportioned 90mm. Our sample's warm-hued ➔

FINAL SCORE

MARINER CUTTER	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Playability	**17**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Looks	**18**/20
TOTAL	**85%**

18+

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AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

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FACTFILE
Mariner Eunoia-OM

DESCRIPTION **Orchestra-size acoustic. Made in China**
PRICE **£429**

BUILD **Solid sitka spruce top, solid paulownia back and sides. Nato neck with 20-fret maple-bound sonokeling fingerboard. Sonokeling bridge, bone nut and saddle, gold diecast tuners, two strap buttons**
OPTIONS **Eunoia-OME electro (£525), and Eunoia-DEC cutaway dreadnought electro (£525) with Fishman Presys Blend**
LEFT-HANDERS **Not at present**
FINISH: **Gloss natural (also available with sunburst top)**

SCALE LENGTH
648mm/25.5"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 43mm
12th fret 54mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20mm
9th fret 23mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 55mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.4mm
12th fret bass 2.9mm
MAX RIM DEPTH **105mm**
MAX BODY WIDTH **380mm**
FINGERBOARD RADIUS **16"**
WEIGHT **2.0kg/4.4lb**

CONTACT **Mariner Guitars**
07710 842989
www.marinerguitars.com

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M-2NS
Solid cedar/mahogany parlour, 628mm-scale slot-head neck
RRP **£369**

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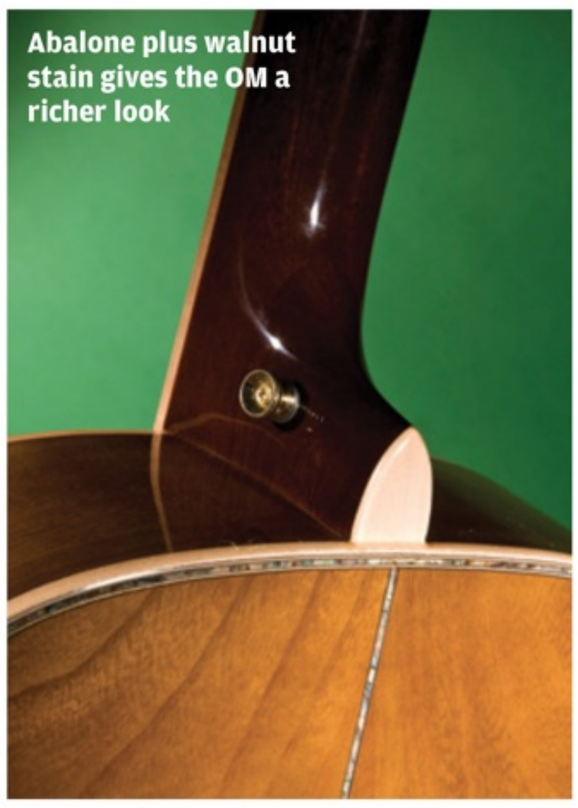
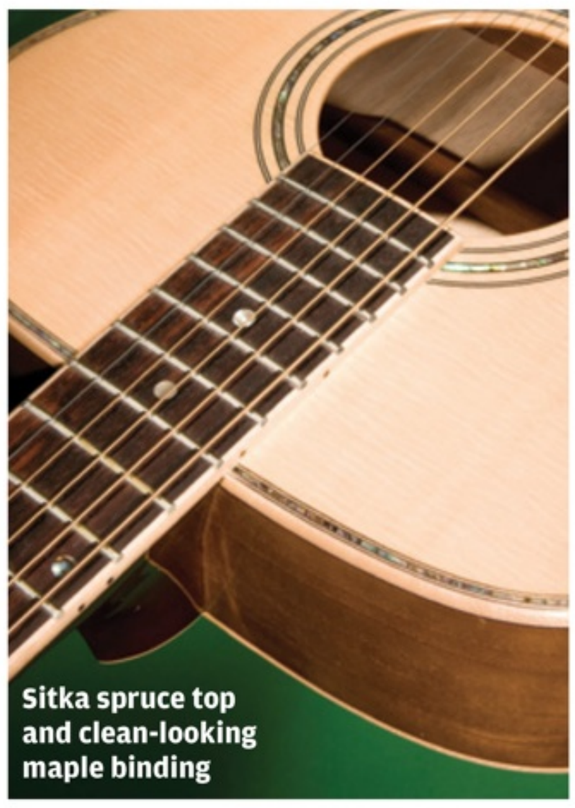
Solid spruce/mahogany parlour with semi-wide 636mm-scale neck
RRP **£259**

Vintage
V130ON
Spruce/mahogany OM with herringbone rosette and Grover open-back tuners
RRP **£399**

Tanglewood
TW70
Spruce/mahogany OM with one-piece neck, bone nut and saddle, open tuners
RRP **£599**


Abalone plus walnut stain gives the OM a richer look


Sitka spruce top and clean-looking maple binding

The Eunoia-OM has a clear-voiced and open delivery with supple dynamics and good volume and projection

cedar front has nice close graining, and the paulownia looks very attractive, particularly the bookmatched back with its three-ply wood centre strip.

The whole body, smartly gloss lacquered, is handsomely bound in coachlined maple, with pearl purfling back and front. This theme is repeated for the soundhole rosette. Like all the Greens, and previous Mariners, the bottom strap button sits amid a 'target' roundel inlay of maple and sonokeling. It's a neat cosmetic hallmark.

Unsurprisingly, the dark-stained satin-finish neck – which is made entirely of one piece save for a separate heel portion – is a fingerstyle-inclined affair, measuring 45mm across the nut and staying relatively broad come the octave. Dimensions are kept comfortably manageable though, thanks to a fairly shallow C-meets-D profile, and the bridge string spacing is an amenable 55mm. The only minor detractions are sharp front nut corners and some slightly scratchy fret tops which need a good polish. These points also apply to our Eunoia-OM.

Sounds

This is unapologetically a blueser's parlour. The tone is quite brash and bright and there's some honk and boxiness in the midrange and even a trace of resonator-like grit to the attack. This isn't to diss the instrument; in fact it's a engaging hoot within context... just not the obvious choice for serenading your sweetheart with a lyrical ballad.

Eunoia-OM

Named after the Greek for 'beautiful thinking', the Eunoia is instantly recognisable as a Mariner thanks to the distinctive scoop-top headstock the brand has employed on all models, save for the parlour, since its inception. This all-gloss, 15"-wide, 105mm-deep instrument is pretty lavishly turned out. The close-grained sitka spruce top displays rich cross-silking and is clearly a high-quality example, while the binding, again maple, is purfled this time with abalone, which is also used within the rosette and for the neck markers and back centre strip. Maple binding along the fingerboard and gold tuners contribute to the upmarket trim.

Whereas the paulownia on the parlour is left au naturel, on the OM it's given a mid-brown 'walnut' staining prior to lacquering, a shade or two lighter than the neck's.

The neck is full scale, again made of one-piece plus heel, and it's a slick player despite an action's that's a touch on the high side and which could do with bringing down a touch: an easy enough task, since there's plenty of break angle over the saddle. Nut span is a mainstream 43mm which together with a moderate-depth 'C' profile offer a comfy grip. A heel strap button is a thoughtful inclusion.

Sounds

This Eunoia ably ticks all the OM boxes. The delivery is clear-voiced and open, the dynamics are supple with good all-out volume and projection, and the tone is a well-poised, sustainful combination of overall sweet brightness and lower-end warmth.

Verdict

The frets and nuts would merit some finishing touches, but these two are very well put together and enjoy keen prices given their all-solid woods and deluxe trim. The Euonia-OM is an excellent all-rounder; the Cutter is great for blues and ragtime – and they're preserving our wood stocks too.

FINAL SCORE

MARINER EUNOIA-OM	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**17**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**89%**

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LAG
Tramontane T200A & T300AE Electro

Cool, effective and extremely stylish, Lag's Tramontane range offers most of the usual sizes in simple acoustic and stage-ready electro forms, with preamp tone presets too. Review by **Jerry Uwins**

French maker Lag's second generation of Tramontanes (named after a wind that blows across southern France) were introduced a year or so ago, covering five budget-to-mid-price Chinese-made series. Body styles include dreadnoughts and jumbos but there's also a good selection of auditoriums, amongst which are our solid cedar/mahogany T200A acoustic and rosewood-backed T300AE electro. Like all Tramontanes they convey a strong range identity courtesy of teardrop, cross-motifed soundhole rosettes; a headstock design, with raised centre portion, borrowed from Lag's Imperator solidbody electric, and winged, through-strung bridges.

T200A

The guitar's art nouveau-style rosette really is very appealing, inlaid with rosewood while the edging and cross are picked out in contrasting maple. A similar coachlined combination of woods is used for the back centre strip and body binding, the latter radiused to lend a flowing touch which is enhanced by the guitar's beautifully smooth satin-cum-low-gloss lacquering.

The bolt-on, full-scale mahogany neck is fashioned to a shallow, slick and comfy C-meets-D profile and adds the vintage touch of a volute under the nut. Span is of regular width, accompanied by an all-purpose 55mm string spacing at the bridge. The flat heel – with a second strap button, we're pleased to find – offers as good up-top access as you're going to get on a non-cutaway acoustic; the rosewood-overlaid peghead's black tuners coordinate ➔

We like the stepped headstock facing with black tuners and nut

Art nouveau-style soundhole rosette in rosewood and maple

The T200A is a speedy player and it's a sprightly, dynamic performer with a sunny tone and a cedary warmth

FINAL SCORE

LAG TRAMONTANE T200A	
Build Quality	18/20
Playability	17/20
Sound	17/20
Value for money	18/20
Looks	17/20
TOTAL	87%

FACTFILE
Tramontane T200A

DESCRIPTION **Auditorium acoustic. Made in China**
PRICE **£345**

BUILD **Solid cedar top, laminated mahogany back\ sides. Mahogany neck, 20-fret bound rosewood fingerboard. Rosewood bridge, graphite nut/saddle,**
OPTIONS **T200ACE and nylon-strung TN200A14CE cutaway electros (£490 each), with StudioLag Plus**
LEFT-HANDERS **Only as nylon TNL200A14CE (£490)**
FINISH **Satin natural**

SCALE LENGTH
649mm/25.55"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 43mm
12th fret 53.5mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20.5mm
Ninth fret 22mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 36mm
Bridge 53mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 1.4mm
12th fret bass 2.1mm
MAX RIM DEPTH **109mm**
MAX BODY WIDTH **393mm**
FINGERBOARD RADIUS **16"**
WEIGHT **1.93kg/4.25lb**

CONTACT: **Barnes & Mullins**
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RRP **£349**

FACTFILE

Tramontane T300AE

DESCRIPTION
Auditorium electro-acoustic. Made in China
PRICE **£605**

BUILD **Solid cedar top, laminated rosewood back and sides. Build otherwise as T200A plus Nanoflex undersaddle pickup; StudioLag Plus preamp with Volume, Sound Presets (1-5), Bass/Treble, Preset Bypass, auto-chromatic tuner, low battery LED, integral battery holder (two 3V lithium)**
OPTIONS: **Other 300-Series auditoriums are nylon-strung: TN300A acoustic (£455), TN300A14CE and slimline TN300A14SCE cutaway electros (£605 each), both with StudioLag Plus system**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH: **Satin natural**

SCALE LENGTH
649mm/25.5"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 43mm
12th fret 53.5mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20.5mm
9th fret 22.5mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 36mm
Bridge 55mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 1.4mm
12th fret bass 2.2mm
MAX RIM DEPTH **109mm**
MAX BODY WIDTH **392mm**
FINGERBOARD RADIUS **16"**
WEIGHT **2.0kg/4.4lb**

CONTACT **Barnes & Mullins**
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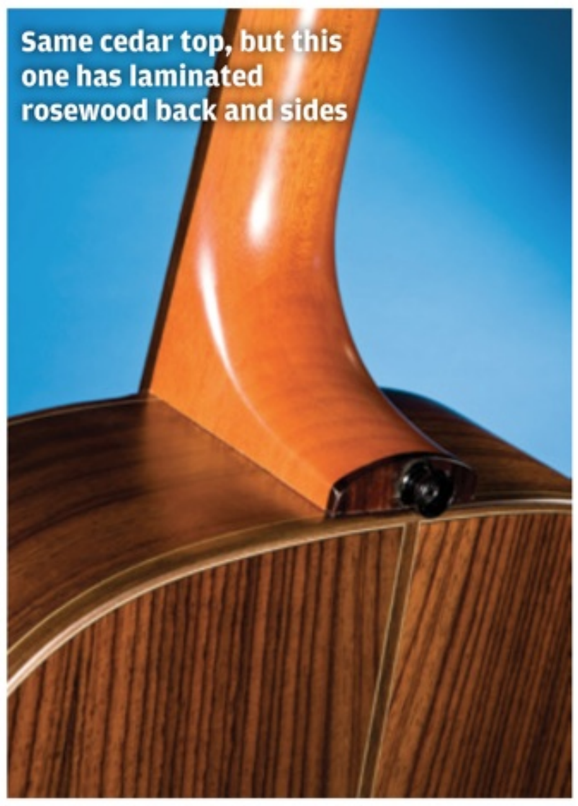
Same cedar top, but this one has laminated rosewood back and sides

Preamp offers five tone presets with bypass plus a basic bass/treble knob

Combine the five preamp presets with sympathetic tonal adjustment and you've got a versatile sound palette

nicely with the instrument's graphite nut and saddle. Our sample's action, while a speedy player, is low on the treble side to the point of prompting occasional high-position fret buzz, and there's a hint of sharpness to the ends of the otherwise well-dressed frets themselves. The bridge has a channel routed out behind the saddle, ensuring a decent string break angle regardless of action height.

Sounds

An engagingly sprightly, dynamic performer, the T200A blends 000-like clarity with a sunny, airy tone, an easy, ringing sustain, and enough underlying cedary warmth to provide a very likeable, well-poised sound.

T300AE

This model is notable for being the only Tramontane auditorium electro that is a non-cutaway, a plus-point for choice given that most such electros are cutaway and not everyone requires that feature. Save for its rosewood back and sides and a preamp system, the T300AE is essentially a reprise of the 200, with the same solid cedar front and identical hardware, neck profile and finish. It also shares its stablemate's slightly ambitiously low treble-side action and the odd sharp fret end.

Designed exclusively for Lag by Shadow, the guitar's preamp is a StudioLag Plus, partnered by the same company's Nanoflex undersaddle pickup. Unusual among analogue systems, the system offers five sound (or tone) presets – Natural Folk, Bluesy, Studio Rhythm, Fingerstyle, Jazz – supported by a combined Bass/Treble control and a switch that bypasses the presets for a neutral voicing. The centre-detented Tone knob is operable whether the presets are bypassed or not. Also included is a system-muting auto-chromatic tuner that works efficiently, even if the weeny array of LEDs isn't that easy to read. The control panel's only handling drawback is a slippery, rather stiff preset rotary which ought to be rubberised or have serrated edges for a surer grip. The power source, two 3V lithium cells, is housed under a slide-off cover.

Sounds

As anticipated, the guitar's rosewood element lends more richness to the low end – and a tad more perceived overall punch – but otherwise the acoustic delivery is broadly similar to the T200A's, and equally enjoyable.

It also proves its worth powered up. The bypassed sound is pleasingly natural; Natural Folk is a slightly harder-edged variant; Bluesy is darker, more low-mid-forward; the gently-toned Studio Rhythm drops the gain a bit for general strummage; Fingerstyle adds a touch of high-end sparkle for picking clarity; Jazz, predictably, is the mellow fella, delivering what it says on the tin. Permutate all these preset selections with a sympathetic range of master tonal adjustment, and the sound palette is impressively versatile and of convincingly good quality. The system has plenty of gain too, and our sample's cross-string output balance is pretty much spot-on.

Verdict

Minor set-up and fret-finishing issues aside, these Lags have got what it takes. Their cosmetic theme is stylish, tasteful and recognisable, and both deliver the 000-style sonic goods. As an aesthetic alternative to all those Martin-alikes, they're a refreshing proposition.

FINAL SCORE

LAG TRAMONTANE T300AE	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**17**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**88%**

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SANDBERG
California TT 5-String

Built in Germany to a very high standard, Sandberg's latest traditionally-styled active five-string is maybe just about as fine as you need a bass to be. Review by **Gareth Morgan**

FACTFILE

Sandberg California TT 5-string

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody bass. Handbuilt in Germany**
PRICE **£1441**

BUILD **Alder body, bolt-on Canadian hardrock maple neck with 22 medium nickel frets on a rosewood fingerboard. Sandberg open gear tuners and Sandberg high mass bridge. Chrome hardware**
ELECTRICS **Active with two Delano T-style single-coil pickups. Volume (pull for passive mode), balance, bass and treble controls**
LEFT HANDER **Yes, at no extra cost**
FINISHES **Various high gloss finishes which include crème (as review model), Lake Placid blue, natural, black, and also various matt finishes including three-tone Sunburst, brownburst, greenburst, natural, plus aged finishes (see website)**
RANGE OPTIONS **Four-string version, £1338**

SCALE LENGTH **864mm /34"**
WIDTH OF NECK
Nut 44mm
12th fret 65mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20mm
12th fret 24mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 9mm
Bridge 18.5mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.0mm
12th fret bass 3.0mm
WEIGHT **4.6kg/10.1lbs**

CONTACT **Synergy Distribution**
0121 270 6485
synergydistribution.co.uk

We've always considered Sandberg basses to be some of the best value handbuilt instruments around: they've literally never failed to impress us. In the past, *G&B* reviewed the Bullet model in May 2004 (Vol 15/1) and awarded it our prestigious Gear Of The Year award for Best Bass Under £1000. The following year the California PM bass (reviewed March 2005, Vol 15/12) repeated the achievement. Now it's the turn of the California TT 5-string.

While Sandberg's Basic, Bullet, Custom and Panther models are fashioned in a contemporary guise, the California series basses lean in the direction of Leo Fender's classic designs from the early '60s. Sandberg hasn't increased the body size to match the five-string neck girth, and that's a good thing, as the weight is kept down to a manageable 4.6kg/10.2lbs. The sleek offset alder body has a gorgeous high-gloss crème finish, one of a large selection (you can also go for matte, or an aged look). Our TT's traditional credentials are further reinforced by the three-ply tortoiseshell scratchplate and a shiny chrome control plate. The body has a subtle forearm chamfer and a deep ribcage carve. The body is just a fraction slimmer from top to bottom edge at the horns than its inspiration,

Stylish headstock and a string-spacing nut plus a zero fret

Six bolts ensure high stability. Rounded heel is a nice touch

Most of Sandberg's other basses are contemporary while the California TT leans towards the early '60s

the cutaways are deeper (the upper subtly, the lower one very much so) and the horns are delicately slimmed down. It's a great example of how to make little improvements to a basic design without losing the true essence.

Our TT has come with a 34" scale configuration but Sandberg will happily build them to 35", and you might find this to be beneficial in the quality of B string tone, although many would argue that the difference is negligible. The maple neck is secured to the body via six countersunk bolts and it has the shallow 'C' contour that's favoured by many a contemporary instrument builder for the lack of stress it places on the fretting hand – it's smooth, ➔

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fast and a joy to play. There's no bulge beneath the nut; the neck graduates smoothly to a well-recessed headstock that subtly re-jigs the famous design with a crashing wave at the far edge.

The headstock has Sandberg's own open-gear tuners, and for a string-tree there's a stylish diagonal chrome slab which takes care of all the string angles over the nut save for the low B. There are 22 medium nickel frets on the rosewood board; the face is free of dot markers, although you will find small white dots along the top edge. Just in front of the synthetic, self-lubricating nut sits a zero fret. The idea with a zero fret is to give the open strings similar characteristics to the fretted notes.

The Sandberg TT is kitted out with active electronics including an own-brand preamp. The pickups are Delano T-style single coil, and the knurled chrome controls take the form of Volume (which, usefully, you can pull up to disconnect the actives and revert to passive mode), Balance, Treble and Bass. It's worth noting that in passive mode, the Treble control functions to increase or decrease treble in the same way as the master tone control on a passive bass.

Under the finish the body is alder: European or swamp ash and mahogany are options too

Sounds

Most people who buy a traditionally-shaped and configured bass want and expect it to have a certain kind of sound, and in these terms, with the actives switched out, the California TT delivers in reassuring spadefuls. The tone isn't awash with booming bottom-end but there's enough to make it clear to you, the player, that this is a bass guitar, and there's enough width on show for warm bottom end, suitable for funk or even (perish the thought) '80s pop. Throughout all of this, the B string stays splendidly focused.

It gets better when you add the Sandberg EQ to the equation, as both bass and treble offer plenty of headroom. The bass EQ adds solidity and stature without spoiling clarity, and the fattened-up bridge tone sounds especially tasty. Adding treble gives variations that range from highly practical to rampantly aggressive: nudge it forwards a tad and you get improved clarity, especially effective coupled to subtle increases in the level of bass EQ, but wind it up to max and the TT slices straight through the top of your head... and then comes back and does it again, and again.

Verdict

The California TT five-string is another excellent Sandberg. The build quality is superb; while we have a tiny gripe about the midrange in twin-pickup mode, if you're after a modern five-string version of the classic two-pickup bass then this is about as nice as it gets. To cap it all, a price of less than £1500, while not insubstantial, is a steal for an instrument that hollers to played like this one. If you're serious about a five-string, don't make up your mind without trying one.

If you want a modern five-string this is about as nice as it gets. The price is a steal for a bass that hollers to be played

Delano pickups are linked to Volume, Balance and a two-band active EQ

the Sandberg's top strings to be both practical and well-balanced.

The midrange exudes a hint of high-mid zing which helps with clarity but never gets anywhere near dominating the overall sound. There isn't a huge amount of punchy attack here, and the TT isn't endowed with spectacular impact in twin-pickup mode; this may be due to the choice of single coils or where they are actually sited on the bass. Treble realisation is excellent, with a pleasingly natural and musical character, although if you dig in a bit in either fingerstyle or slap mode it'll bare a gleaming set of sharp trebly teeth without too much encouragement.

The front pickup is an earthier-sounding affair; twin mode might be a bit of a stylistic blank canvas, but here a raspy bottom end coupled to a darker, lower midrange bias creates a great sound for rock, blues or old school soul. It's a similar story with the bridge pickup. There's no excess of burpy high mids to give a slightly synthetic tone – it's all clean and crisp with plenty of snappy attack but also a surprisingly

FINAL SCORE

SANDBERG CALIFORNIA TT 5 STRING BASS	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Playability	**19**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**19**/20
TOTAL	**91%**

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FACTFILE

MB Octaver

DESCRIPTION **Dedicated bass guitar octave pedal. Made in Italy**

CONTROLS **Oct 1, Oct 2 and Dry controls, stomp switch. True bypass, battery or 9v power supply operation; PSU not included**

RRP **£146**

RANGE OPTIONS **Analogue pedals: Ground Stereo Pre (£531), Super Booster (£146), Super Pro DI (£90), Compressore (£211), Distortsore (£224). Digital pedals: Super Synth (£312), Chorus/Flanger (£311), Reverb (£311)**

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MARKBASS

MB Octaver & Bass Tube Marker

The Italian bass specialists' new pedal range should satisfy almost every sonic need. We select a squonky octaver and a subtle overdrive. Review by **Gareth Morgan**

Just over six years ago in our December 2005 issue (Vol 16/9) we had the pleasure of reviewing the Markbass CMD102P combo. We loved it – and it won the *G&B* Bass Amp Of The Year. In the ensuing period we've also checked out the Italian company's amplifiers, combos, cabinets and accessories, numerous in quantity and varied in application, but always high on quality and practicality.

We also reviewed the excellent Super Booster pedal (October '09, Vol 20/11), and Markbass recently chose to partner this unit with an impressive range of new pedals, numbering three digital units and six analogue ones. This month we've managed to get our hands on a brace of the analogue units, namely the MB Octaver octave pedal and the Bass Tube Marker distortion.

MB Octaver

Fans of Markbass' traditional bumblebee livery will be delighted, for the Octaver comes finished in a sort of sandy orange colour – not as bright as that used on the amps, but still cheerful in a slightly left-field manner. Contrasting this with black bottom, back and sides adds a note of seriousness and sobriety to proceedings. It's a fairly compact little unit of pretty average stompbox size, 126mm deep, 81mm wide and 55mm high. As the Octaver isn't a perfect oblong, these are approximate measurements; take into account the height gained via the controls and the extra width of the rivets. Build quality-wise, as you'd expect from Markbass, it's solid and robust and should stand up well to the rigours of a heavy gigging schedule.

In terms of controls and connectivity, the smell of simplicity hangs heavily in the air; Markbass has saved the complex stuff for their digital offerings. In terms of jack sockets, you get a simple input and output. You can use a 9v power supply, although there isn't one supplied as standard, or you can use the battery compartment on the bottom.

On the unit's face you'll find a chrome stomp switch and three orangey yellow plastic controls which shape the effect: Oct 1 and Oct 2 adjust the level of the one- and two-octaves down signals, and the Dry knob is fundamentally a blend control with which you can adjust the level of your clean tone. A blue LED situated between the three controls ignites to alert you to the fact that the unit is active.

Sounds

Tracking is a major issue with octave pedals, but in this instance the tracking isn't bad at all – you can get right down to open E before there are any issues. The intensity of the setting is a major factor here, especially where the Oct1 and Oct2 controls are positioned between 10 and two o'clock. You'll also find that setting the Dry control much below the two o'clock mark produces a noticeable volume discrepancy between clean and effected sound.

Bass Tube Marker

Markbass tells us that the Bass Tube Marker is designed to provide 'natural amp-like distortion', presumably – given the name –of the valve amp simulation variety. It too is a metal box dressed in familiar clothing, the colour of the top and front being a similar shade to the Octaver, only a little lighter in hue. Again, the sides, back and bottom are black – a more practical colour choice as these are the planes likely to take the most punishment while being transported. In terms of dimensions, it's identical to the Octaver – 126mm deep, 81mm wide and 55mm high. As well as being identical in size to the Octaver, the Tube Marker is endowed with the same excellent build quality and overall robustness. Both of these pedals weigh 350g/0.77lbs, so neither are going to have much impact on the overall gigging payload.

The top of the Tube Marker carries the controls, while the rear has a 9v power input between the input and output sockets (again, you get a battery option, but a power supply unit isn't part of the deal). As with the Octaver, there's a standard chrome stomp switch while the other controls are of the yellow plastic variety, arranged in a triangle. Drive adjusts the amount of distortion, Tone dictates the high frequency contour, and Level controls the overall volume of the unit. You'll also find a blue 'on' LED situated between the controls.

Sounds

To use the Tube Marker effectively, you'll need to be careful with the Level control. Distorted playing requires a level that matches or is slightly louder than your clean sound, and we found this point to be near to 12 o'clock on the control. Once you've done this, the mayhem on offer is actually very musical-sounding, with lots of harmonic life and the sort of warmth you really would associate with an overdriven valve amp. It does the stated job, then, and although we'd prefer to have a Blend control, kicking in the effect doesn't suck the tone out of your sound.

Rotating the Drive control clockwise goes from an edgy farting sound to a nasty snarl before entering serious buzzsaw territory – you don't get maxed-out white noise mayhem, but that is in no way a bad thing. Use the Tone dial (again, clockwise rotation) for a brighter, snappier, more aggressive edge to proceedings and, if you're feeling really brave or just want the nastiest possible sound, full-throttle both controls. It may be pretty impractical for most occasions, but it's great fun just flailing away.

Verdict

These two pedals do what they're supposed to with a minimum of fuss. Build quality is good, layouts are straightforward, and they're simple to use. On the downside, both are a little limited in usage and we reckon a Blend control on the Tube Marker would have turned a good pedal into a great one. Still, if you're shopping for distortion or octaver or just looking to check out some options, a trip to the nearest Markbass dealer won't be in vain.

These two pedals do what they're supposed to, though we'd have liked a Blend control on the Tube Marker

The majority of practical sounds are attained by keeping all three controls within the parameters we mentioned above. Following this guideline will unearth a good selection of throaty gurgles that will get you close to familiar '70s and '80s synth bass sounds. Dry and Oct 1 at two o'clock and Oct2 at 10 will satisfy those needing to get close to the synth bass sounds used on songs like *Tainted Love* and please any fans of Pino Palladino's funkier fretless work with Paul Young; Palladino was trying to emulate Stevie Wonder's embryonic '70s synth bass sound, and there's plenty of scope for that with this setting. Reversing the Oct1 and Oct2 settings produces a sound that's more of a basic rumble – a heavier sonic effect that's great for fat, sleazy, legato lines. More radical sounds are definitely on offer too, but more extreme settings restrict the range which you can play without some unwanted distortion creeping in.

FINAL SCORE

MARKBASS MB OCTAVER	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Versatility	**15**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**15**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**80%**

FINAL SCORE

MARKBASS BASS TUBE MARKER	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Versatility	**15**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**16**/20
Vibe	**16**/20
TOTAL	**82%**

FACTFILE
Bass Tube Marker

SPECS **Dedicated bass guitar distortion pedal. Made in Italy**
CONTROLS **Drive, Tone and Level controls, stomp switch. True bypass, battery or 9v mains operation; PSA not included**
RRP **£129**

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Photographic MEMORIES

As a teenager in the ’60s Tony Keen found himself pointing a camera at some of the best-known musicians of the era. Today, as Lars Mullen discovers, his guitar collection aims to rekindle the joy of those early days

For many children of the ’60s gaining entry to a rock, pop or jazz concert was a dream in itself. For Tony Keen, the situation was different: he *had* to be there. His stepfather ran a photographic business – and young Tony was roped in to help. ‘I was stuck up the chimney, so to speak, at a very early age,’ he grins. ‘By the time I was about 15 I was taking photos for the *Staines & Egham News*, covering any subject from topical news to local jazz and blues concerts. Staines Town Hall was high on the list for many touring bands that later became household names... the Pretty Things, the Yardbirds, John Mayall. Spencer Davies once actually gave me a lift home in his Morris Traveller. I was very young, so it was a very exciting time for me.

‘My late uncle Terry Brown was a jazz trumpeter. He played with some iconic musicians like Tubby Hayes, Johnny Dankworth, Ronnie Scott and Bruce Turner, and later he became a record producer at Phillips studios in London’s Marble Arch, where he handled the jazz/folk label, Fontana. I pinch myself now when I think I sat and watched artists like Julie Felix, the Spinners, Martin Carthy and Alexis Korner recording albums. Obviously, at the time nobody knew how big they would become.

‘I’d spend hours with Terry listening to pianist Dave Brubeck and saxophonist Cannonball Adderley. He’d get in all these white-label discs from various record companies around the world like Riverside and Storyville, and he would decide which ones would be released in the UK. I got some great albums for Christmas and birthdays!

Left, an Epiphone Les Paul Studio Deluxe; right, an Epi Custom Prophecy

Epiphone Les Paul Custom and an Epi Les Paul Ultra

'Over the years I've accumulated quite a unique selection of photographs. I did quite a lot of album cover shots for American jazz bands, including Buck Clayton and an influential LP called *Jazz From A Swinging Era*. One of my favourite commissions was the filming of *Supershow* in '69 – it finally came out on DVD a few years ago. This was a two-day festival filmed in London in a big empty disused linoleum warehouse. To see Stephen Stills, Buddy Miles, Jack Bruce, Roland Kirk and Jon Hiseman's Colosseum jamming away was a real highlight. I have a great photo here on the wall that I took of Clapton with his Firebird, swapping licks with Buddy Guy.'

The time Tony spent as a pro photographer and journalist has influenced the guitars he has today. 'I was really into the instruments these guys were using,' he explains, 'so I started playing myself, jamming Chuck Berry songs with friends and having a lot of fun playing the coffee bars and small pubs.

'Like a lot of people back then I was using a Hofner, as European guitars were affordable and readily available. I can't say I was aware of the importance of Fender or Gibson... for me the ultimate guitar was a Rickenbacker 330 in Fireglo finish. But these days there are lots of guitars which echo the classics, so collecting isn't just for the well-off – players on a budget can have affordable guitars that play and sound great too.

'My first guitar was an electro-acoustic Hondo which my wife Lesley bought me in the early '80s. I have to give her credit – she has encouraged me to buy a lot of these guitars, even though she lost a dining room and a bedroom in the process! But the ball started to roll when I took the Hondo in for a service to Andertons in Guildford in Surrey around 2005. Hanging on the wall was a Korean-built Epiphone Les Paul Custom in black with three humbuckers and its gold hardware all aglow, bathed in spotlights. I went home and sat for days just thinking about that guitar. Little did I know that Lesley arranged for me to pick it up when I went back for the Hondo, which happened to be on my birthday. I also bought myself a Line 6 combo and went home a happy man.

'I returned to the same shop a couple of weeks later for a mooch about and spotted a limited edition Epiphone Les Paul Studio Deluxe in wine red, again with gold hardware.

'I can relate to humbuckers. It's because of Wes Montgomery and that thick jazzy sound'

I love gold hardware... if you're paying a reasonable sum of money for a guitar, why not have some gold on it! It was basically an affordable stripped-back Les Paul, but I really liked the lack of binding and the fact that there weren't too many snazzy cosmetics. I really fancied that guitar, but couldn't go home and mention it in case Lesley thought she'd recently bought the wrong one. I eventually decided to just go ahead and buy it, but as they say, "Those who hesitate are lost' – and it had been sold.

'I searched for ages, by now realising that this was a hard guitar to find as it was a limited edition that only ran for a few years. In the process I introduced myself to eBay, which felt just like having a guitar shop in your front room. Eventually I tracked down my own Epiphone Les Paul Studio Deluxe, a 2005 with a carved mahogany body finished in the same see-through wine red.

'It's a great player, and the 12" radius neck makes sure wild string bending won't fret out. With Alnico Classic Plus humbuckers, mahogany construction and the LockTone bridge and stop bar tailpiece, it's a got a meaty sound with good sustain.

'I can relate to the sound of a humbucker more than a single coil. I think it's because of Wes Montgomery and that thick jazzy sound. I can get pretty close to it with this Epiphone Les Paul Custom Prophecy. ➔

A pair of Epiphone SP3s with slanted 'buckers, single coils and Firebird type pickups

Gibson Nighthawks in semi-plus-P90s and original slanted humbucker forms

Danelectro U2 with famous signatures and a Hohner OSCTR

It has a highly figured maple top in a black cherry finish and the same bridge, stop bar tailpiece and graphite nut as the Studio model. The double octave neck has the "speed tapered" design for that extra-sleek feel. The Dirty Fingers humbuckers will overdrive the front end of most amps with ease. There's also room for a coil tap mod, but I don't think I'd trust myself to do that. The sustain is wonderful, but at a price – it's a bit of a shoulder-snapper at five kilos.

'I was amazed when I read in a Les Paul review round-up that the Korean-built Epiphone Les Paul Ultra got higher marks than some Gibson Les Pauls costing up to ten times as much. This one is my favourite out of the whole bunch. It's in faded cherry with a quilted maple veneer top and gold-plated hardware. The mahogany body is chambered, making it a couple of pounds lighter. That really seems to help with the dynamics – its got a kind of essence of a 335 about it, very bluesy. It's definitely one guitar I wouldn't leave home without.'

Tony is a fan of the Nighthawk, a guitar introduced nearly 20 years ago by Gibson in an attempt to make a lighter, nimbler alternative to the Les Paul. He's got two – and also a pair of Epiphone versions of the same guitar. 'I've heard players say they can differentiate between a Gibson and an Epiphone model, but I'm not a professional player, and I'm not really that bothered, as the Epiphones sound so good,' he says. 'The Epiphones are the SP3 model, fitted with OBL pickups. I've got one in red and one in black. They have a really impressive tonal range and they play perfectly. Actually, I think the SP3s are more versatile than the Gibsons, as with the extra middle pickups, the five-way switches and the coil-taps you can get some great country blues sounds.

'But for those real authentic blues licks I think this Gibson Blueshawk in Chicago blue with cream P90 pickups takes some beating. Initially I fell for the looks, but I also knew it would be a great sounding guitar. Any tone-head would be spoilt for choice with the three-way selector switch and six-way rotary Varitone control. I bought this one from John Verity, who I think is one of Britain's best blues players.'

'For real blues I think the Gibson Blueshawk with the P90s takes some beating'

Next up is a Danelectro U2 single cutaway reissue in malt shop creme. 'I've always been fascinated by the unique sound of the Danelectro, a simple guitar built down to a budget, but I can't work out which type of reissue this is as the colour doesn't quite match the brochure spec,' ponders Tony. 'Either way, it's rather special to me as it's signed by Little Richard and Chuck Berry. I do play it regularly, but I make sure I don't wear off the autographs.

'There are a lot of really great bargains out there as long as you're not too snobbish about the brand name. Here's another fabulous guitar, a solid-ash bodied Hohner OSCTR finished in transparent red. You can see where they got the inspiration, but it's got a modern twist. The action is super-low and the maple neck and pickup configuration give a really distinctive biting sound. I've only ever seen one other, in white pearl.

Two Hondos: one blue rocker and a maple-fingerboard '70s copy

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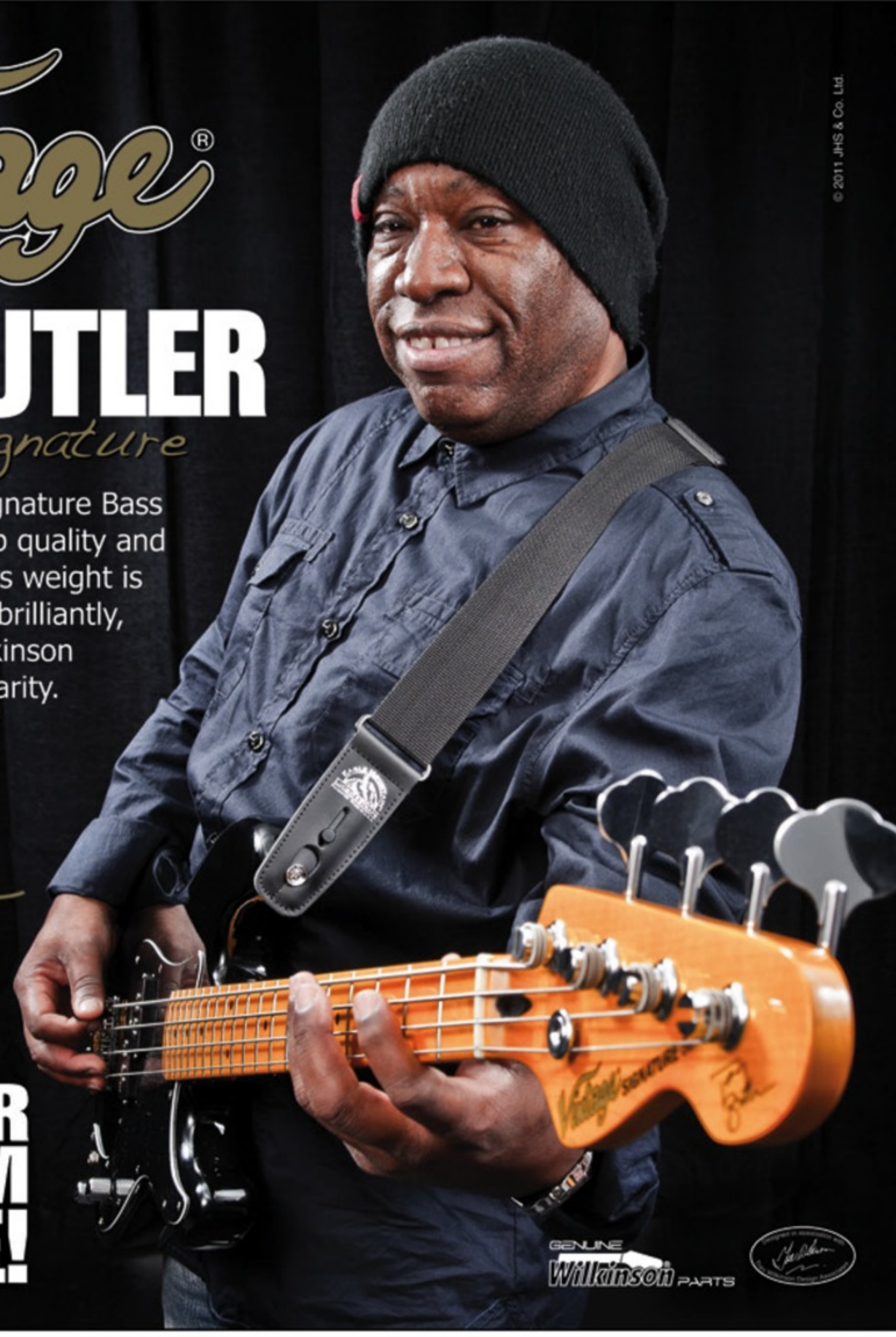

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'In contrast, this blue Hondo guitar couldn't be any more basic, really. It's just got a pair of humbuckers, one volume and tone control and a selector switch. I lent this one to a friend for a gig recently and it just screamed through his Marshall combo. I really admire the concept of a no-frills grit-and-grind guitar.

'Staying with Hondo, this '70s example had me jumping up and down in the dining room when I opened the box! This was another eBay purchase and, to be honest, I bought it for the looks alone – I fancied the natural finish offset with bindings and fret board markers all in black.

'It has a very distinct fat yet cutting tone. The ash body is thinner than a regular Les Paul, which must have some effect, and the maple fingerboard must make a difference too. The pickups are probably just typical mass-produced ones at the time, but they're really lively. The machineheads have been changed for Gibson vintage-style ones, but they look the part. I reckon this was a pretty good buy for a hundred pounds. There are some great guitars around that can still be bought on a budget.'

Tony next appears with a pair of semi-acoustic guitars from a yesteryear brand that still flies well beneath most guitar hunters' radar. 'With a lot of these older lower-priced models you need to look past the brand name,' he points out. 'I mean, the names can be somewhat interchangeable. It must have been a bit like buying a pair of high-priced trainers, then being offered the same thing as a knockoff out the back door. I'm certainly not saying that these guitars *were* coming out the back door, but in many cases they must surely have been produced in the same factory as guitars by other makers.

'These are both Series 3 Columbus semi-acoustics, and I think they date to the mid-'70s. Of course they're a tip of the cap to the Gibson ES-335, and the quality of the finish – not to mention the sound and playability – aren't a million miles away. One of them used to belong to Ron Von Ryan, who was associated with the Dave Clark 5. Both these have been lovingly looked after, and they're almost identical.

'There must be a landfill site somewhere full of tremolo arms. Where do they all go?'

'I've always loved the 335 body shape. I suppose it harks back to meeting Tich from Dave Dee, Dozy, Mick and Tich at the Phillips Studios. He had this big-bodied semi-acoustic Gibson which I later identified as a 335. While we were all having a drink in the corner pub – I think it was called the Mitre, a trendy bar where all the artists would meet – the guys doing the band's backing tracks came in and asked me to take part.

'Well, for someone who can't carry a tune in a bucket I was nervous, to say the least, but it turned out all I had to do was handclaps and some shouting in the background. The best thing is that I can say I was on a song that reached number 2 in 1967!'

The best kind of day for Tony is a day when something new turns up in the post. 'I send up a prayer that it hasn't been smashed in transit,' he admits, 'and then I normally spend a day cleaning it up. It's the spare parts for the older guitars that are becoming increasingly hard to find – and expensive too, especially the tremolo arms. I think there must be a landfill site somewhere full of those things... where do they all go?

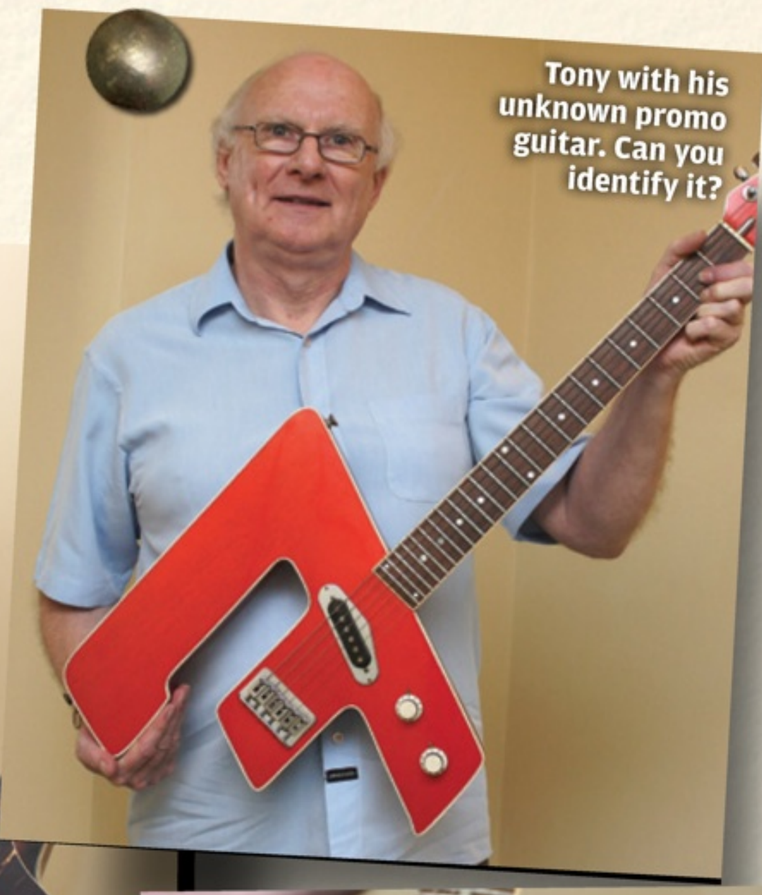
'I was lucky with these two semi-acoustics from the '60s – they're both complete and they've cleaned up really well. One is an Audition, which was the house brand of Woolworth's, and the other I'm not too sure about as it's had a headstock repair and it's missing the logo, but must have been under the same banner. Judging by the pickups Id think these are from the vast Teisco range.'

There are more Far Eastern relics to come, but first Tony produces the most startling guitar in his possession – some form of promo or stage guitar with a body resembling a giant flying 'F'. 'I don't know where to start with this,' he confesses. 'Like I said, I'm not totally a single coil fan, but when this big red "F" guitar came up at Cameo Auctions in Reading I had to have it. It's turned out to be the most expensive guitar I have, but I think it's well worth it.

'I can't find any information on it at all, and I'm hoping *Guitar & Bass* readers can help me out. I think it might have been a promotional model made for a guitar show, and it's been said that it's something to do with Fender. I've never seen another, although the serial number indicates at least nine were made. It's only got one single-coil ↦

A matching pair of Columbus thinlines from the mid-'70s

Nameless Japanese semi and an Audition, both with trems present



Tony with his unknown promo guitar. Can you identify it?

Neat jack socket and what look like Fender Elite knobs

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J-pop trio: Satellite 65/T, a Zenta and a Sakai

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Teisco Top Twenty

pickup and one volume and tone control, but it plays quite well. With the body shape and the double binding, it's really pretty unusual.'

We're back in Japan with the next lot of guitars. 'Some of these '60s instruments are really quite cute,' Tony enthuses. 'A lot of them were distributed in the UK by Fletcher Coppock & Newman, a distribution company that still exists. Others were the house brands for chains like Woolworth's. The Satellite 65/T and Teisco Top Twenty have body shapes not a million miles from a Fender Strat; this plywood-bodied Zenta looks for all the world like some sort of hybrid Fender Telecaster, while this Sakai was more or less based on the Fender Jaguar. It's incredible to think how many guitarists learnt to play on these kinds of instruments. All mine work, and they sound typical of guitars from that era. I can actually recall seeing many of these guitars used around the London clubs by several top acts during the early part of the '60s.'

'It's incredible to think how many learned to play on cheap '60s Japanese guitars'

In one swift move, we jump from the old to the ancient-meets-modern with a pair of outrageous custom guitars. 'What can you say?' Tony shrugs happily. 'All I know is that these two were made by "Hunt of Dartington", who I think must have been a student, a teacher or a furniture maker at Dartington College in Devon. The taller one is number 22 and the other is 17, so he must have made a few. They actually sound pretty good, with a sort of medieval kind of tone.'

Regular service is resumed with a white Burns Marquee. 'Though I'm from the Shadows era, I must be one of the few players who weren't that influenced by them,' Tony says. 'They were iconic of course, so I think a Burns guitar of some sort is a must-have in a lot of guitar collections. The Burns Marquee is full of character... and it's got gold hardware too!

'Next to the Burns is a Rockson from Brandoni Guitars in London – pretty stunning for £140, with a flamed carved top, gold hardware, a humbucker and two single coil pickups, a 24-fret neck and licensed Floyd Rose vibrato. I mean, how can you go wrong... it plays and sounds as good as it looks. I was tempted by the Rockson Guitar Kit that they do for £199 which includes an amp and guitar case.'

A Burns Marquee and a Rockson by Brandoni Guitars

We've got three more Epiphones to go. 'The one on the left is a Nouveau Spotlight CMT,' Tony says. 'The model was moved to the Epiphone line by Gibson and was only produced between '87 and '89, some say because of legal moves by PRS. The high quality woods and hardware made it very expensive to produce, and it sold for £400. It has a chambered body with a curly maple top, a set neck with ebonol fingerboard, coil-tapped EMGs and a fulcrum vibrato. It was a stunning guitar for the price back then, and it's probably one of the most expensive guitars I've bought.

'I'm not that fussed on the SG shape but this Epiphone SG was a limited edition with a Vibrola, and it followed on with my ➔

Two Epiphones: a rare Nouveau Spotlight and an SG with Vibrola

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affordable theme. This was another eBay purchase... I got a bit carried away with the bidding, but it has all the authentic SG appointments and plays and sounds good.

'The last Epiphone is another fairly rare one – a '76 Epiphone Scroll SC350 with a bolt-on neck. It's basically an SG with a scrolled top horn, and they were produced in the Matsumoko factory in Japan up to 1979. It's got humbuckers and a mahogany body with a German carve around the edge, and it sounds thick and dark. There's a few wear marks on the body, so I think it's seen some active service over the last 36 years.

'I do dabble on bass, and what better for that '60s sound than a violin bass? This one's an Epiphone, bought secondhand. I'm looking for an Epiphone acoustic bass too.

Lastly, two acoustics. The black electro-acoustic is the Hondo Stagemaster, the present from Tony's wife which started his quest in the early '80s, and the second is a Fender FG1. 'This one's a mystery,' decides Tony. 'I contacted Fender with the serial number and they said this was a basic model, but as you can see it has a gorgeous quilted top, so I think this is a pre-production model. The serial numbers don't match up either... but either way, what a sweet-sounding guitar.'

It's been a long road for Tony from the expensive 'affordable' guitars of the '60s to the practical budget instruments of today.

1970s Epiphone Scroll and Epiphone violin bass

Electro-acoustics from Hondo and Fender

'£30 was a lot for an unplayable piece of crap back then,' he points out. 'Those early guitars were the route to stardom, but I'm not sure if the same incentive is there today. In my day, you were cool if you walked down the street with a guitar on your back, and if you could play a tune then you got all the girls following!

'In a way, it relates to photography. Today, budding photographers might spend tens of thousands on a Hasselblad camera hoping they're going to capture the ultimate snap. A high-end guitar, like a Hasselblad camera, is a wonderful thing... but it won't immediately make you a better player.'

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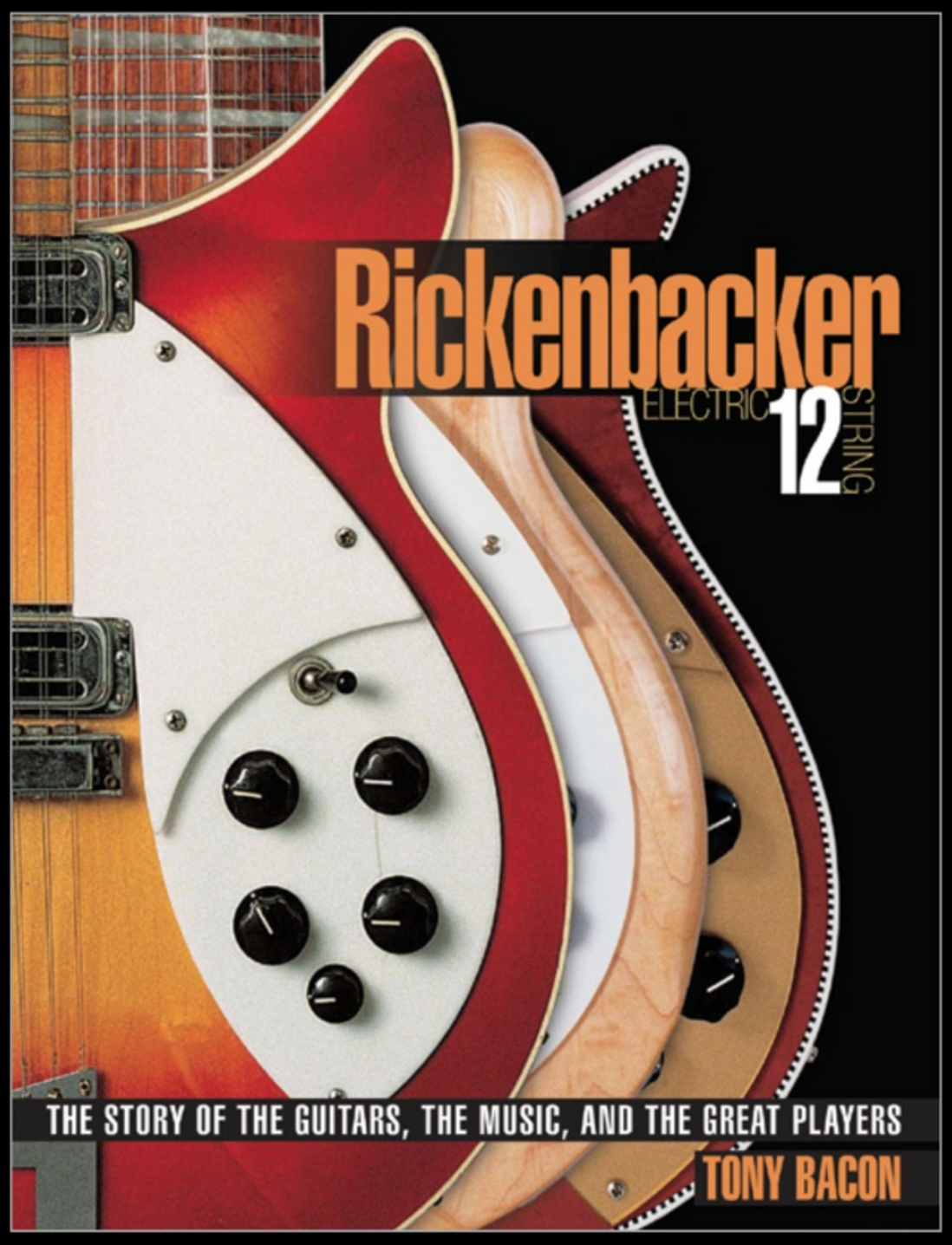

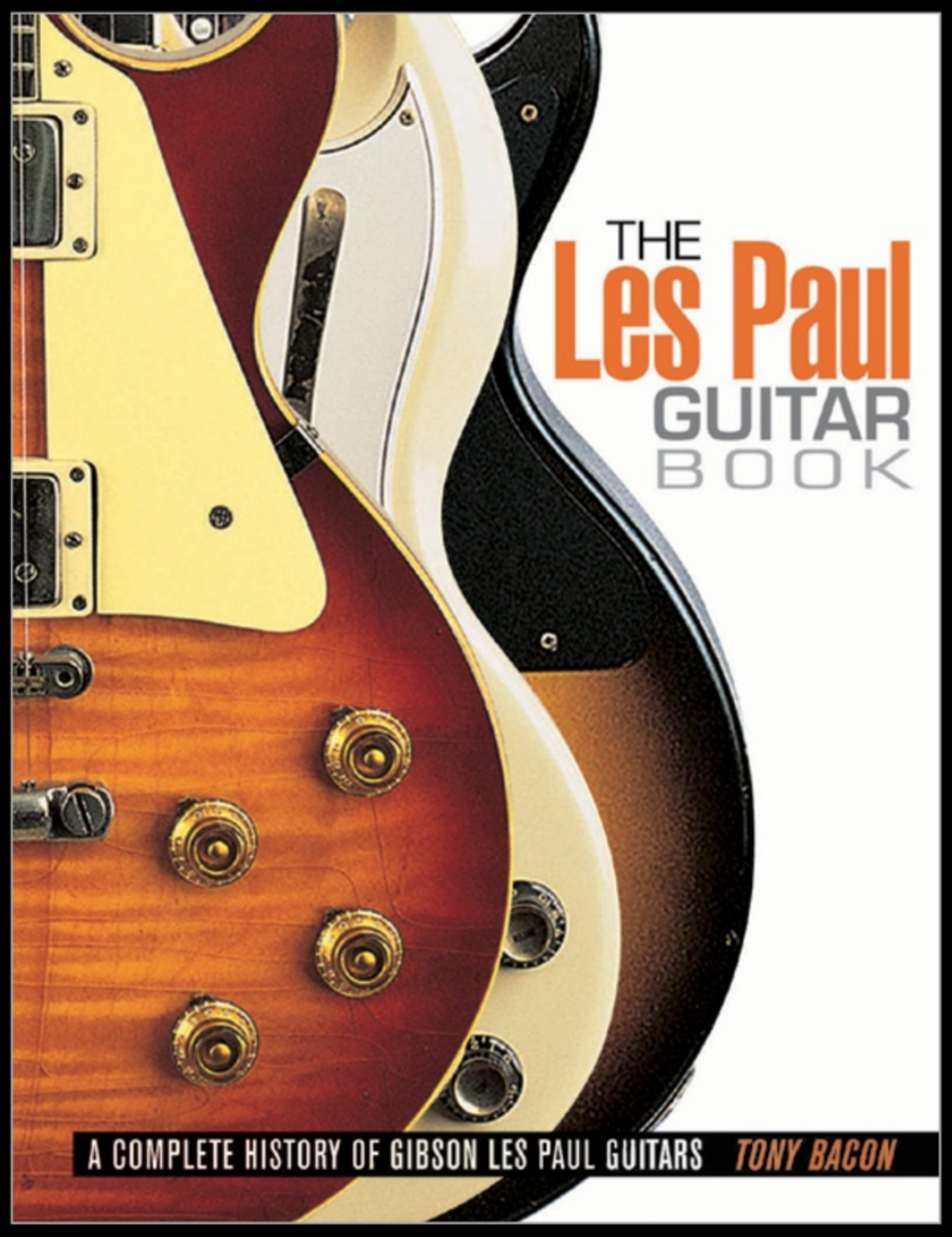

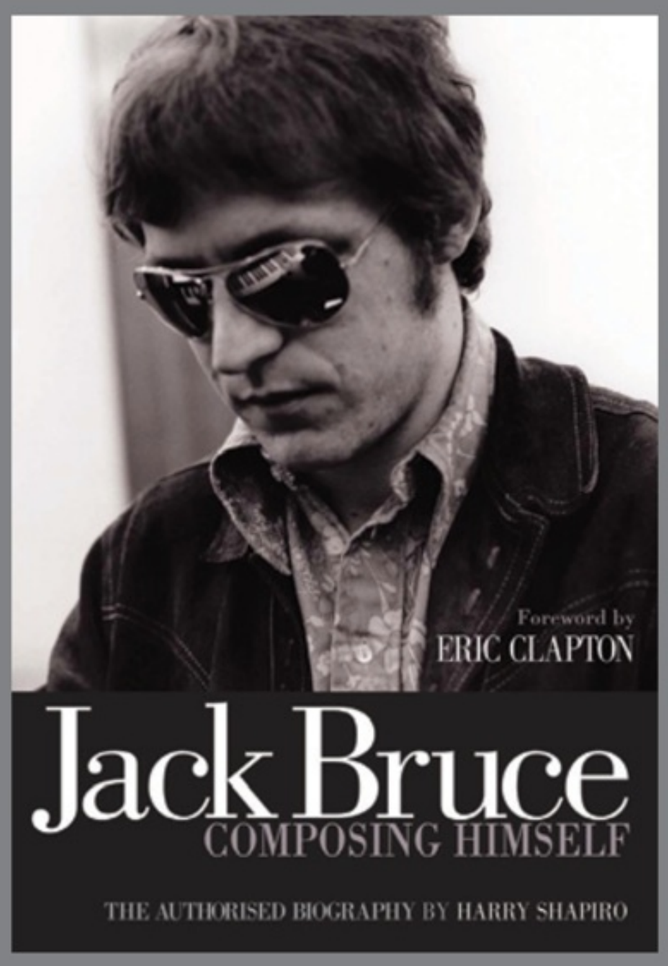

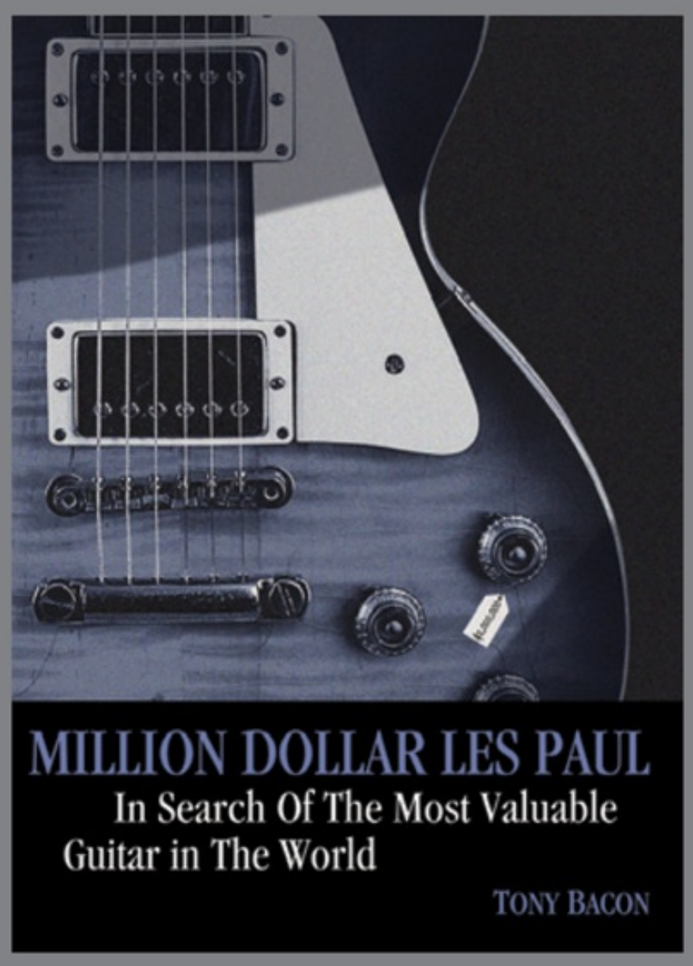

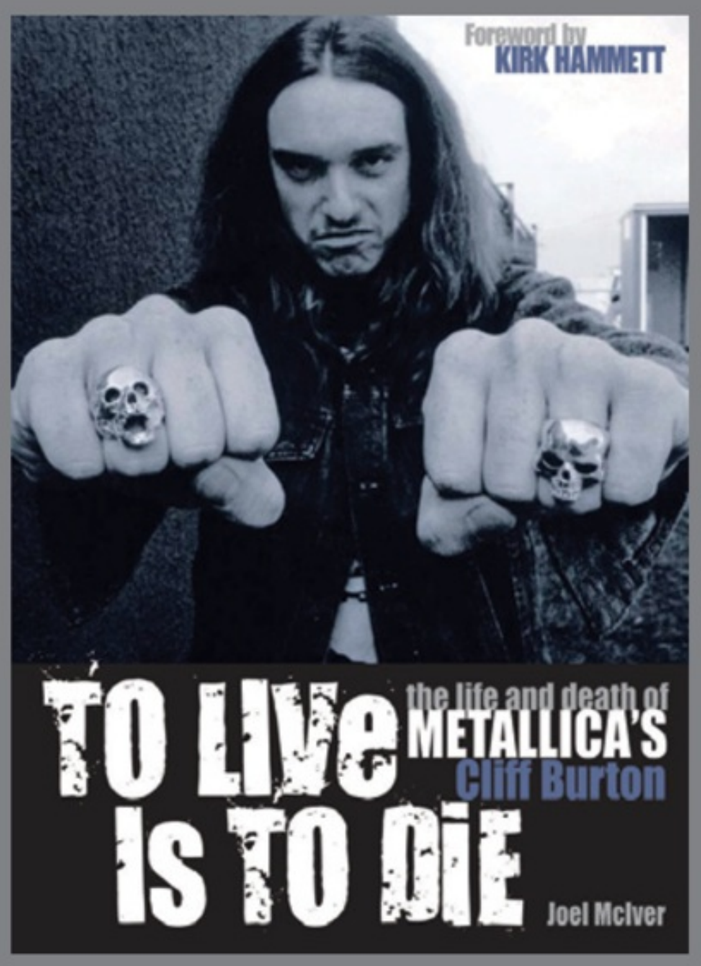

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HOOKED ON CLASSICS

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Forget about the wood, the electrics, the price and the kudos for a minute, requests Phil Harris. When it comes right down to it, guitars are meant to be played. If you lose sight of that, he reckons, you've lost a helluva lot...

Given the amount of time that I now spend dealing with wonderful guitars, I know I lead a lucky life. However, like any working person with family commitments, I don't get nearly as much time as I'd like to actually do what got us into this in the first place – play guitar.

And yes, sometimes I do feel very sorry for myself about this fact. I may have developed an obsessive interest in build quality, parts and serial numbers at various points over the years, but nothing comes close to the sheer addiction I have to guitar playing.

It hit me early on in my life, and it's lasted right through my professional playing career and on to being the proud grandfather that I am now – and it shows no signs of letting up. I'm not big on holidays, and often in recent times when I've been away with my better half I've justified going into a shop to buy a vintage Gibson J-45 on the basis that I could turn a profit on it. Now though the financial incentive was real, strictly speaking, that wasn't the actual reason for the purchase; no, it was simply that I have trouble in going without playing guitar for more than a couple of days maximum – even on the very enjoyable holiday I was on at the time. And now I had the perfect excuse to obtain and play a very nice acoustic.

Now I'm a wee while retired from the professional circuit and I have no desire whatsoever to deal with touring and a lot of the other nonsense that goes with it. However, the desire to get up and 'have a blow' has never really left me. In fact, on the occasions that I've done it since I retired from full-time playing, I've really enjoyed it. I've never been the most technical of players, despite the hours I've put in, but I've always played with passion. If I lost that, I'd stop.

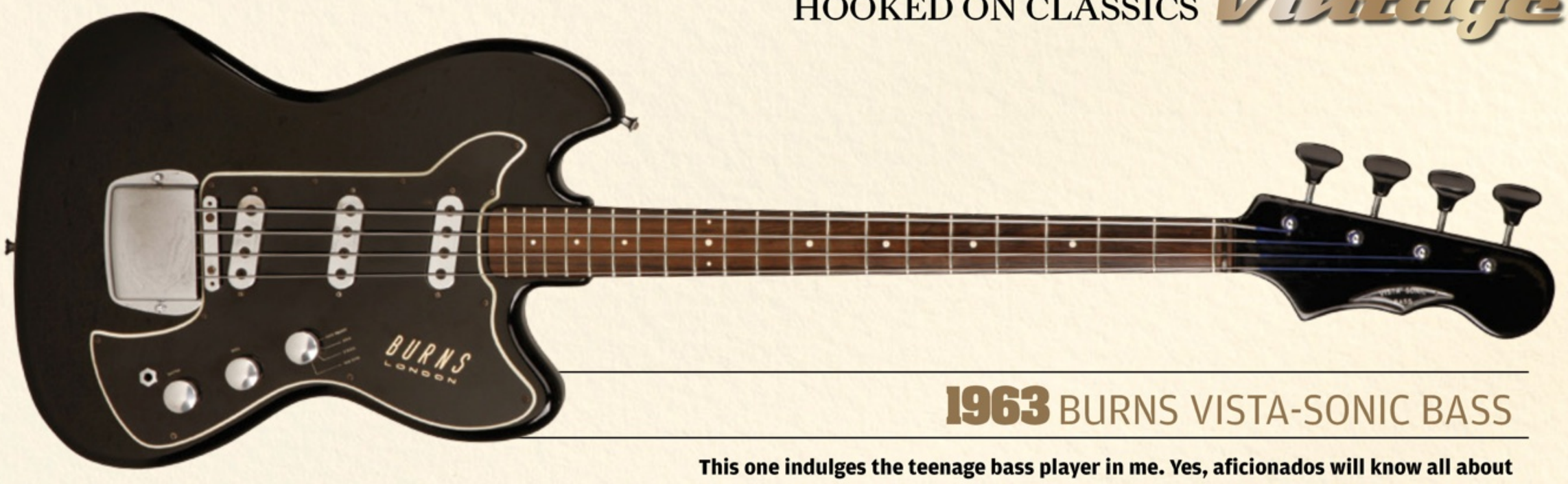
On the occasions I've had a play with people since retiring, one of the things I've had to remember is all that competitiveness and jealousy amongst guitar players. Unless you're on a higher plane of being, it's something I feel comes across everyone at some point. Lord knows, I've had the pleasure of playing with people such as Jeff Beck and Gary Moore – as well as plenty of less household names – who could blow me out of the water, but the affliction seems to be based on the player's own insecurity, rather than their actual level of playing.

As I've got on in life, I know that such behaviour and attitude never makes you look good. The last time my hackles rose, it was while watching a guitar player in a local pub who really thought he was something special, and he was treating the other musicians like dirt when he really wasn't anything to write home about. I couldn't help myself; before my wife could stop me I'd invited myself on stage, and by the end everyone (including the man himself) had realised he wasn't the new Eric Clapton. My wife wasn't happy with me, and she was right not to be. Despite the joy of 'beating up a bully', I wasn't playing for the love of it. Lesson learned. So the guitars featured this month are here for no other reason than I love 'em.

I may have developed an obsessive interest in guitars, but nothing comes close to playing

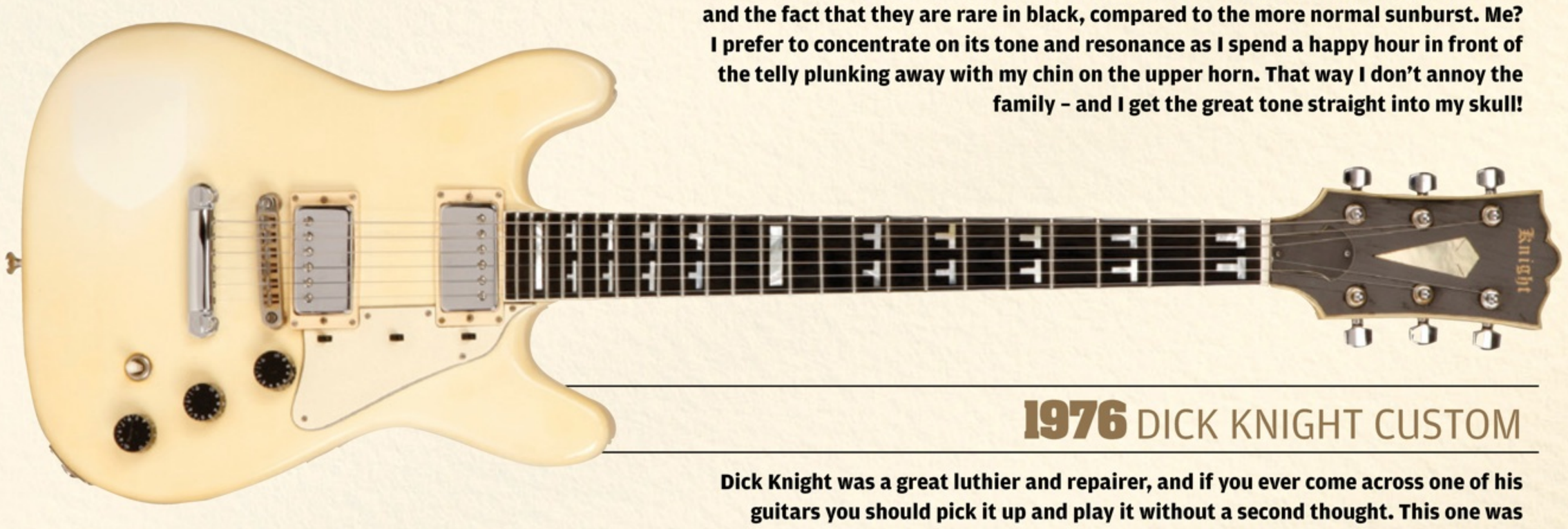
1971 MARTIN 000-28

Many people love dreadnoughts, but I've always preferred smaller 000 models. I blame Lonnie Donegan: despite the fact that even I wasn't old enough to be into guitar playing when Lonnie hit big, I saw him play one on television and immediately wanted one. I've had a few over the years, but this perfect (and quite reasonably-priced) 000-28 is so good I've bequeathed it to my grandson upon my passing



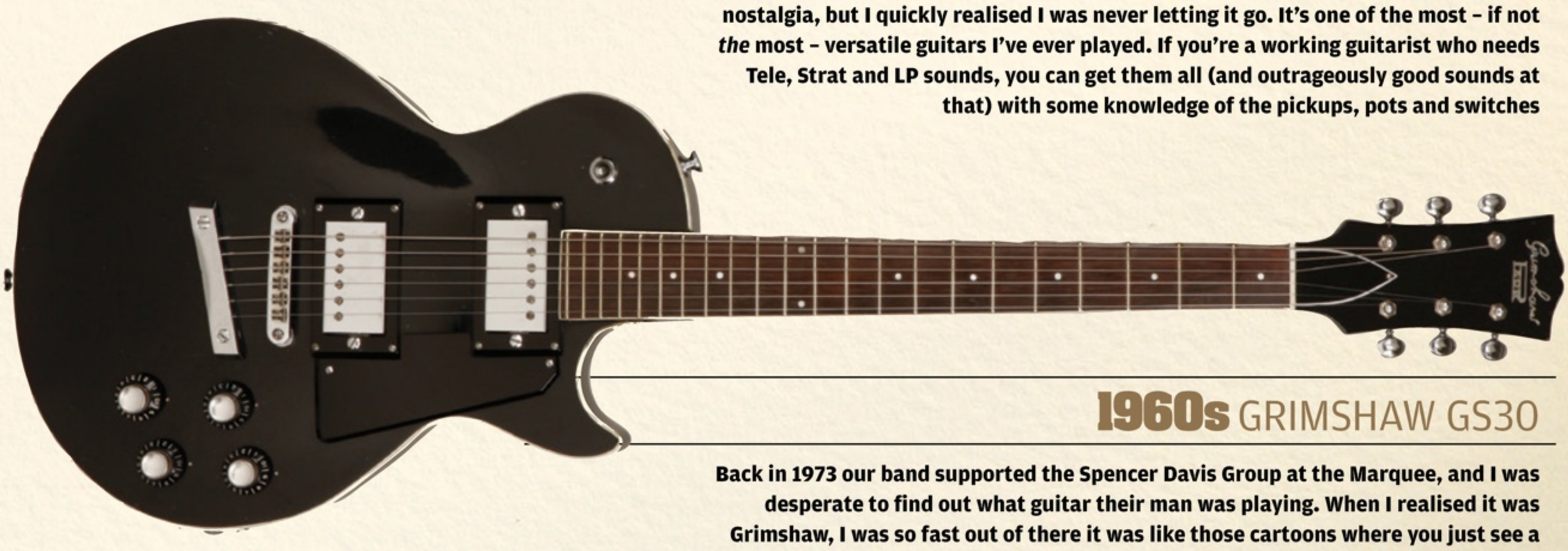
1963 BURNS VISTA-SONIC BASS

This one indulges the teenage bass player in me. Yes, aficionados will know all about the music that it's been used for (such as Status Quo on P*ictures Of Matchstick Men*), and the fact that they are rare in black, compared to the more normal sunburst. Me? I prefer to concentrate on its tone and resonance as I spend a happy hour in front of the telly plunking away with my chin on the upper horn. That way I don't annoy the family – and I get the great tone straight into my skull!



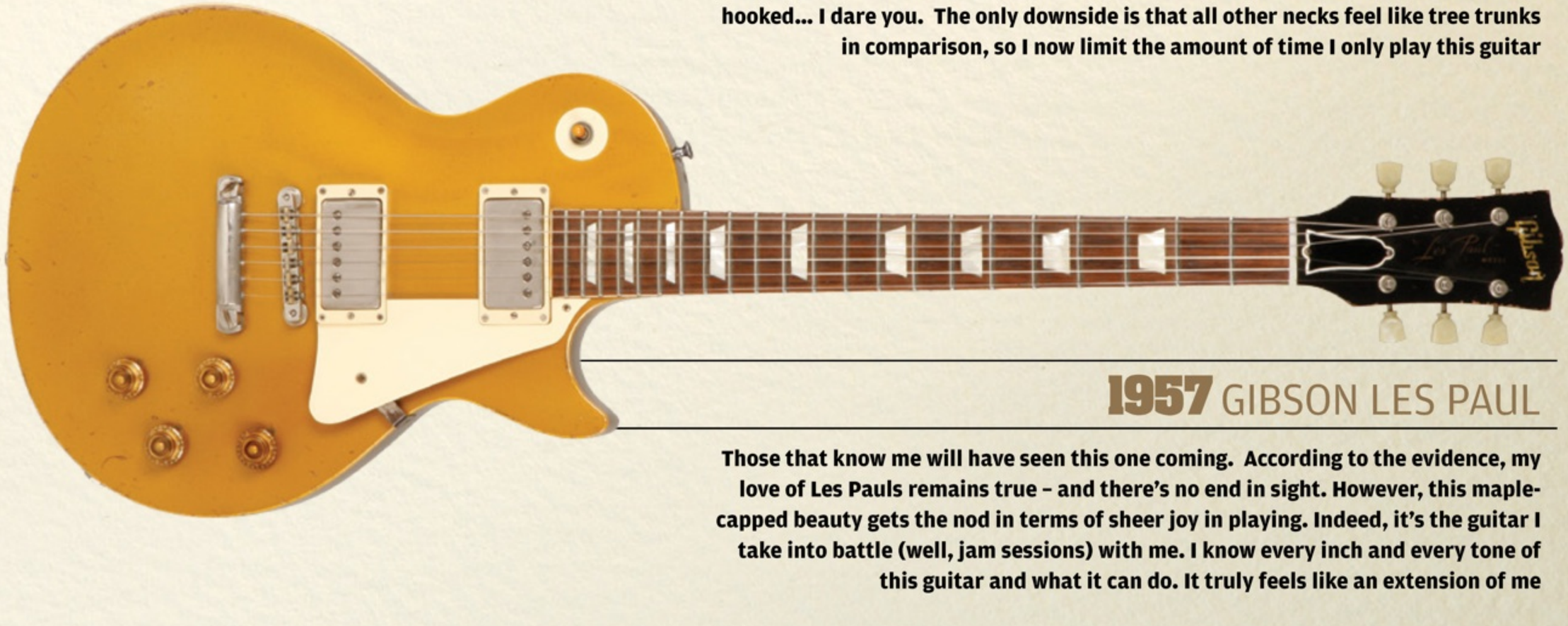
1976 DICK KNIGHT CUSTOM

Dick Knight was a great luthier and repairer, and if you ever come across one of his guitars you should pick it up and play it without a second thought. This one was made for Tony Thorpe of the Rubettes (hence the 'TT' inlays). I bought it out of nostalgia, but I quickly realised I was never letting it go. It's one of the most – if not *the* most – versatile guitars I've ever played. If you're a working guitarist who needs Tele, Strat and LP sounds, you can get them all (and outrageously good sounds at that) with some knowledge of the pickups, pots and switches



1960s GRIMSHAW GS30

Back in 1973 our band supported the Spencer Davis Group at the Marquee, and I was desperate to find out what guitar their man was playing. When I realised it was Grimshaw, I was so fast out of there it was like those cartoons where you just see a foot and a cloud of smoke. Well, I was wrong. Yes, I know that people view them as a poor man's Les Paul, but try playing some Elmore James on this one and not getting hooked... I dare you. The only downside is that all other necks feel like tree trunks in comparison, so I now limit the amount of time I only play this guitar



1957 GIBSON LES PAUL

Those that know me will have seen this one coming. According to the evidence, my love of Les Pauls remains true – and there's no end in sight. However, this maple-capped beauty gets the nod in terms of sheer joy in playing. Indeed, it's the guitar I take into battle (well, jam sessions) with me. I know every inch and every tone of this guitar and what it can do. It truly feels like an extension of me

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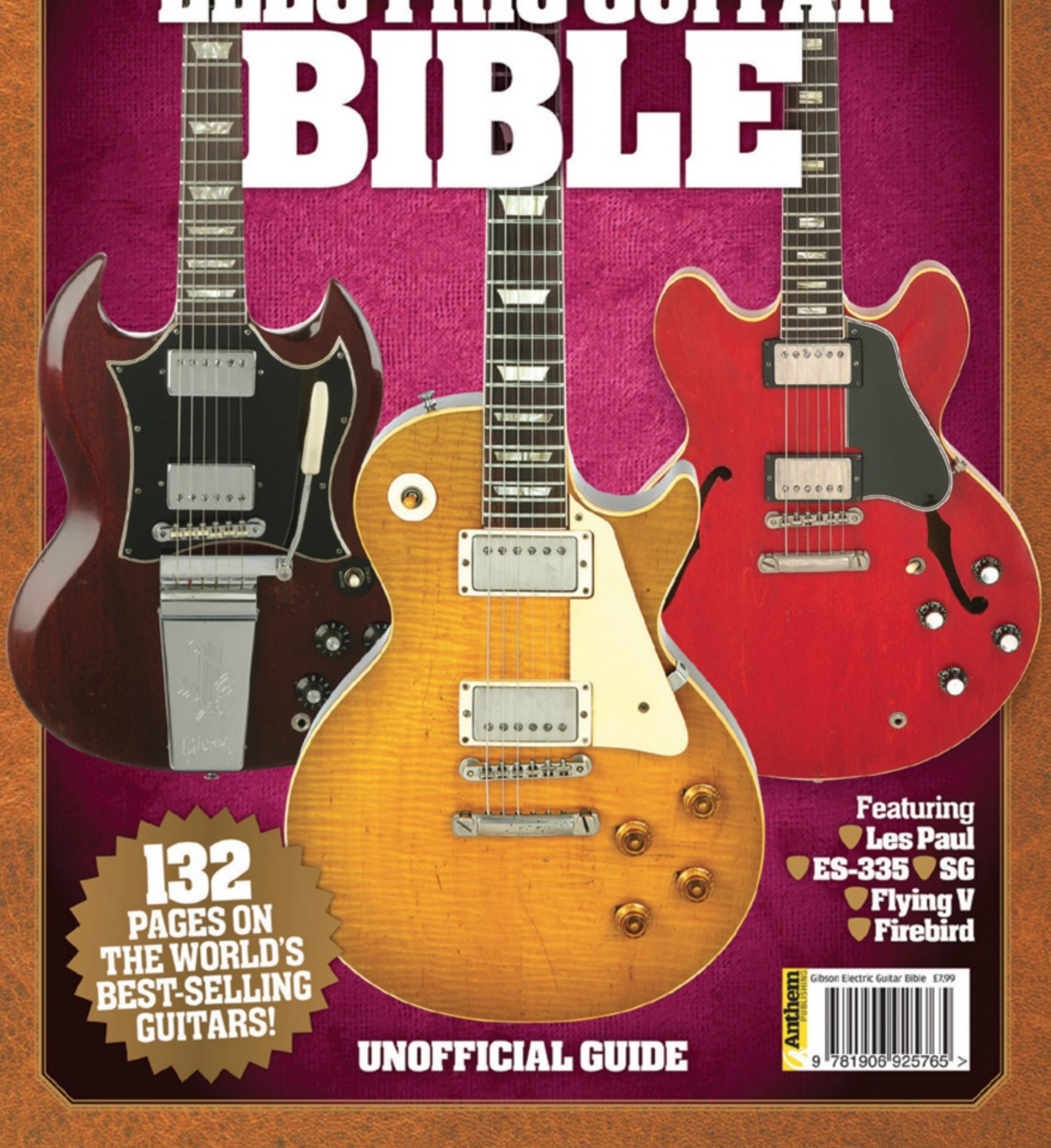

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LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

It's the early '70s and Sid Bishop finds himself sleep-deprived and unwashed, torn between his new position in Denmark Street and far-flung gigs. Day job or rock life? A decision had to be made...

Life takes its twists and turns and I did endure more than one personal crisis whilst at Top Gear, but one matter in particular has relevance to this story. I'm sure it will resonate with anyone who's ever tried to juggle playing music with something else: it concerned my career as a working musician.

Having been guitarist with the Deviants until 1969, I was involved throughout the '70s in a rock'n'roll biker band I'd put together called Bishop's Big Boppers. By about 1974, against all expectations, the band had become increasingly busy. I had succeeded in negotiating a good management and booking agency deal, all resulting in a seemingly endless stream of plum gigs, and a record deal was a distinct possibility. Most important of all, we were making money, which was in itself a fairly unusual state of affairs.

Trying to balance all this activity against having to do a regular 'day job' was evolving into a major problem. It usually meant having to get away from the shop very promptly at 5.30pm, dashing in a cab up to Euston or Kings Cross station, and catching a train to somewhere usually a very long way away. The rest of the band would already be at the venue, having departed London with the van full of gear much earlier in the day, and already fully set up and soundchecked. Eventually I would turn up, on a good day perhaps with a few minutes to spare; otherwise, arriving on stage barely in time to plug in and start playing. After the gig we would load up the van and head back to London, often getting home at the crack of dawn, with just enough time for a cup of tea and shower before returning to Top Gear for yet another full working day.

Once in a while the band would have two or even three gigs directly following each other. This meant that I had to catch the last train back to London after the gig, as I was the only one with a day job. For example, we once had consecutive gigs in Norwich, Leicester, Stafford and Bristol. Absolute mayhem! The rest of the guys would find a cheap local hotel or B&B for the night, or at a pinch doss down in the van, and set off for the next gig the following morning. If I'd missed the last train, as happened more than once (I spent one night freezing on the open windswept platform of Lichfield station, much of it in the company of a local character I shall call 'Cider Woman') I would be stranded there until the first morning train arrived and would make it back to the shop just in time to open up, missing out the cup of tea and shower stage altogether. You have my sympathy if you too have fallen victim to this insidious treadmill.

Bishop's Big Boppers: (l to r): Brian Cook (drums), Barry Knight (vocals) Terry Neville (rhythm guitar) the late Derek Hardy (bass) and Sid (lead guitar)

'I missed the last train and spent the night freezing on the open windswept platform of Lichfield station in the company of Cider Woman'

This situation could not continue. Although I was making money, my work at the shop was suffering, my guitar playing was below par (not that it was that great to start with) and I was going for days on end with little or no sleep, not to mention showers. In addition, coping with the logistics of dashing all around the country on British Rail was not getting any easier. Further to this was the almost constant (and somewhat justified) ear-bashing I was getting from the first Mrs Bishop.

A choice had to be made: the shop, or the band? It wasn't easy. I loved working in the shop, and I loved playing in the band, especially at a time of some commercial success. Looking at the big picture long-term, though, inevitably the shop had to win. For one thing, the wages from the shop were regular; they needed to be, as I had a wife and a young child to look after and a mortgage that needed paying. I can remember sitting down and having a heart-to-heart with Top Gear's co-owner Craig Bradley. It was probably something he said that finally forced me into making a decision. With some regret I handed over the guitar mantle to Darts' very capable George Currie, and from then on my only involvement with the Big Boppers was in a managerial capacity. It was a close-run thing, but I'm glad I made the choice that I did; the band collapsed soon afterwards, whereas the Top Gear odyssey had still a while yet to run. More about that next month...

WORKSHOP

The Best Amp Modding Tips

You don't need to yearn for a new guitar amp when the potential of the one you already have remains unexplored. **Huw Price** takes us through six of the easiest improvements you can make

The quest for perfect tone can be a frustrating and expensive endeavour. Even if we are lucky enough to acquire a great amp, there can still be little things that bug us. For instance, the low end may sound a bit loose, or the treble may be a bit harsh and strident. Perhaps your amp breaks up too soon, or doesn't break up quickly enough. Most frustrating of all, it may provide the exact sound and feel you're looking for – but only at a volume level that is way too high.

If your amp doesn't even come close to doing what you want, then it's probably best to sell it and buy one that's better suited to your needs. On the other hand, if it gets you 95 per cent of the way there then selling the amp to make up that extra five per cent may be ill advised, especially if you have to take a loss. Sometimes a few well-considered and relatively minor tweaks can turn that amp from an also ran into a winner. So here are our top amp mods.

1 SPEAKER SWAP

Every guitar you own ends up going through the speaker in your amp, and you can waste a lot of time and money swapping pickups, potentiometer values and tone caps in your amp in a futile attempt to fix issues that may actually be caused by your speaker. Back in the day guitarists habitually changed their speakers, which is why so many old Fenders ended up with JBLs and Marshall cabs ended up with Fane Crescendos. Strangely, though, speaker swapping seems to have dropped down the league table of amp mods.

These days many guitarists seem to regard speakers as integral to their amps and accept whatever the manufacturer decided to put in there. Some manufacturers choose the speakers that they genuinely believe to be the best match for the circuit, while others make decisions based on the profit motive. Whatever the case, the only things keeping that speaker inside your amp will be four bolts!

There are so many aftermarket speakers that it would be impossible to examine them all here. The best way to research is to trawl discussion groups on the net and to read reviews. It's a vast subject, but suffice to say guitar speakers generally come with three types of magnet – alnico, ceramic and neodymium – and all three have distinct characteristics.

You should only install speakers that can cope with the power of your amp; that's just common sense. However, the power rating of the speaker tells you nothing about how loud it might be. Instead you should look at the sensitivity rating. A sensitivity of around 100dB is high, and anything around 92dB should be considered low.

This matters, because a sensitive speaker will make your amp much louder (and you can probably expect more clean headroom too). So putting something like a Celestion Blue in a tweed Fender Deluxe or Princeton will

Few production amp makers will put a great – and expensive – speaker like a Celestion Blue in an amp... but you can

make that small combo far more useful for gigging. On the other hand, less sensitive speakers might allow you to crank that JTM45 without deafening everybody in the room.

Players will often baulk at the idea of spending £200 on a great speaker that will improve the sound of their amp and all their guitars, while at the same time they'll pay the same for a set of handwound pickups. Go figure!

2 VALVE REPLACEMENT

There was a time when even the humblest guitar amps would have been loaded with high-quality valves like Mullards, Brimars, RCAs and so forth. Alas, most of the great valve makers in Europe and the US ceased production many years ago, and while there are still some great valves being made, there's a wide held lingering perception that the sound quality and reliability of the valves made by the top builders of yesteryear has never been surpassed.

Inevitably, budget valve amps tend to come with budget valves, and some claim vast improvements can be made by installing high end replacements. Companies like Groove Tubes and Watford Valves actually sell valve sets that are selected to produce specific results. For instance, Groove Tubes' preamp sets include Fender and Marshall high-gain kits or Fender Soft Touch kits. Watford Valves sells full re-valve kits for specific Marshall, Mesa, Orange and Ampeg amps with various voicings.

An old amp deserves quality valves. Right: GrooveTubes' replacement preamp valve sets can provide a range of tonal results

You may decide on a valve upgrade even if all your valves are functioning correctly and you're not getting any of the tinkling, rattling or whistling noises associated with microphonic and failing valves. Perhaps you'd prefer a hotter preamp tone, or a tighter and clearer response from your power amp. Your best bet is to contact various reputable valve suppliers to ask their advice and discuss your specific requirements.

3 VALVE SWAPS

Swapping valves is more about shaping and altering tone rather than enhancing reliability and subjective tone quality. For instance, many early amps had 12AY7 preamp valves. These have a gain factor of around 44 compared to a factor of 100 for a typical 12AX7. Fender's '57 Deluxe reissue has 12AX7s, but players can swap to 12AY7s for a more vintage tone and response. Alternatively, a 12AY7 front end can be made crunchier by dropping in a 12AX7. With a gain factor around 70, a 5751 is a great compromise.

Modders often change power valves. Some players convert their EL84 amps to run on 6V6s to achieve a more 'American' tone, but it's debatable how much of the sound is the valve and how much is the configuration of the circuit. Swapping from octal-based tubes like 6V6s, 6L6s and EL34s to EL84s is simple thanks to converters like Yellow Jackets. In addition to fine tuning your sound, you can reduce the power of your amp: a Class AB 50W amp with a pair of EL34s can be dropped to around 15W with EL84s in Class A. You'll have more scope to crank it up and, since this mod is easily reversed, you can revert to EL34s for bigger gigs. Yellow Jackets also make pentode to triode converters that will reduce power by around 50 per cent.

4 ATTENUATION SWITCHING/POWER SCALING

Master volume controls have been a feature on amps for decades. The problem is that many players rely on overdrive in the power stage to get the tone and feel they need rather than overdriven preamp valves running into a clean power stage. Fortunately there are now various ways other ways to get cranked amp tone at reasonable volume levels.

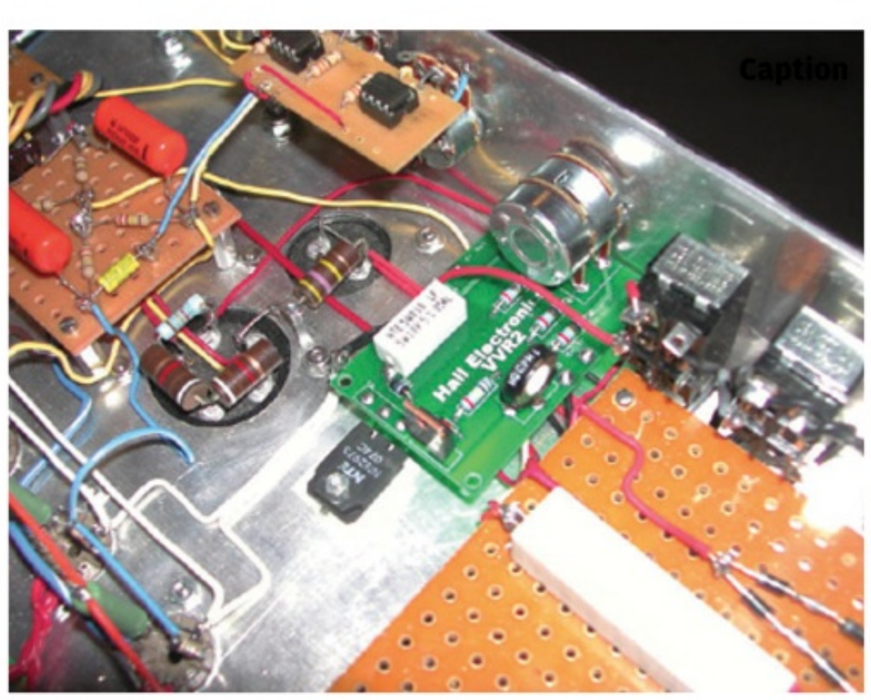
Power scaling is becoming quite a common feature on amps these days. Without getting too technical, this works by altering the bias and lowering the b+ voltage going to the screens and plates of the power valves. You use them in much the same way as a master volume, but the power stage can still run at full throttle – and that sounds good.

Various companies offer power scaling kits that you can retrofit into your own amp. Check out the London SB-1 Power Scaling kit or Hall Amplification's VVR2 and VVR3 boards. Contact the manufacturers to check compatibility with your amp.

Rather than attenuate the signal inside the amp, many choose to place a dedicated attenuator between the output of the amp and the speakers. Most of these devices feature switchable resistor networks, just like the ones built into some amps. The Weber Mini Mass (pictured below) is far more interesting because it features a real speaker motor 'for realistic interaction between the attenuator and the output circuit of the amplifier'. So the amp is basically driving a speaker with no cone – and no cone equals no sound.

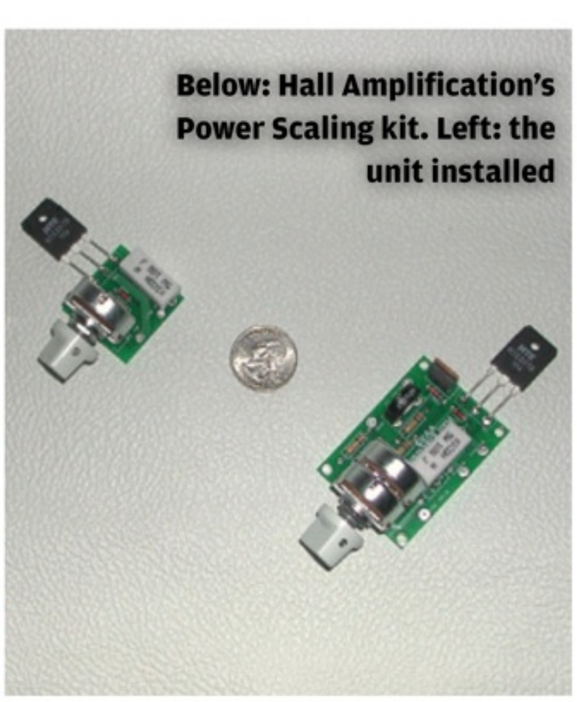
The front panel has three impedance settings, a bypass switch, treble compensation and a level control. There's even a DI output for direct recording and the Mini Mass can be used as a dummy load for testing or for DI.

Caption

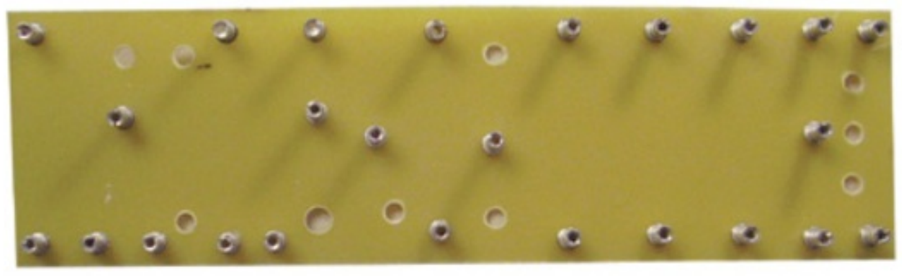


Caption

Below: Hall Amplification's Power Scaling kit. Left: the unit installed



5 DROP-IN BOARD



Above, an empty Champ turret board; right, a populated Marshall turret board

Amp connoisseurs may spend hours discussing the relative merits of different circuit boards. Many respected high-end amp builders, like VHT and Sheldon, argue that high-gain circuits sound better on PCBs. Old-style tag strips, eyelets and turret boards tend to be favoured for vintage-toned amps, although the assumption that the sound of vintage amps can be directly attributed to the construction method used for the circuit board may be questionable.

Nevertheless, time has proved that traditionally-made amps can enjoy bewilderingly long working lives, and come 2055 there will doubtless be many serviceable 100-year old tweed Fenders. Old-style boards are also easier to modify, mend and maintain.

Sometimes companies choose to reissue classic models with inauthentic circuit boards. Guitarists often buy these amps in good faith then decide that their amps aren't quite the real deal when they compare them to a vintage model. Various companies, such as Triode USA, Marsh Amplification and Mojotone, offer drop-in replacement boards to turn inauthentic reissues into the amps they really should have been in the first place.

You can buy boards pre-loaded with components that only need to be connected up to the chassis-mounted components. Alternatively you can buy empty boards with all the eyelets or turrets ready and in position to accept the components of your choice. There are even replacement boards for modern budget amps like the Epiphone Valve Junior, so if you can handle a bit of DIY or you know a decent amp tech, a drop-in board may be a financially viable route to boutique tone.

6 RECTIFIER TWEAKS

The mains socket on your wall provides the input transformer of your amp with an alternating current (AC). Once the transformer has sorted out the required voltages the AC has to be converted to direct current (DC), and all amps employ rectification and filtering circuitry.

Amps can have valve or solid state rectifiers; some even have both. The one constant is that no audio ever passes through the rectifier section of your amp. So this one isn't really about sound in terms of frequency response, but more to do with the feel and dynamic response of your amp.

The rectifier influences the voltage provided by the power supply section of your amp and voltage most certainly has an effect on tone and response. Rectifier valves have internal resistance so as the amp demands more current, for instance when you hit a power chord, the voltage drops and this causes the output power of the amp to drop. So the front end of that chord squishes, and the rectifier valve returns to full voltage as the note decays. Sonically this is similar to what happens when we use a compressor, and when amps do it it's usually called 'sag'.

Some players like the feel of a saggy amp but a spongy and loose low end may be the trade-off. The lower voltages may cause earlier break-up, too. Amps that are running on voltages that are higher than spec can feel tight and stiff (this is a problem sometimes encountered by novice amp kit builders). Having said that, modern rockers and metal players generally prefer punchier and tighter lows with a more aggressive attack. Specialist high-gain amps usually have two or three rectifier valves to meet the current requirements, or they're fitted with solid-state rectifiers that can supply a fixed voltage.

Some vintage amps have way too much sag at high volume levels, so you may be able to substitute a more robust rectifier valve. Tweed Deluxe users can replace their saggy 5Y3s with 5U4s or even GZ34s to tighten up the lows and provide extra clean headroom. The Weber Copper Cap rectifiers are drop-in solid state rectifier replacements that are claimed to simulate the response of various valves while placing less demand on your power transformer. Those seeking more sag from amps with solid state rectifiers should check out the Tube Rectifier simulation kit from Watts Tube Audio.

When considering a rectifier mod, make sure the transformer in your amp can provide sufficient current for your new valve. Also, be aware that higher voltages may cause aging amp components to fail. If you're a collector/purist this may be a tragedy, but if you take a pragmatic view it's a good way of weeding out the components that might have failed you on a gig. Replacing a valve rectifier with a solid state one can be risky if the amp has no standby switch because the valves will get full power right away rather than warming up gradually.

You can increase headroom on a vintage amp like this tweed Deluxe with a rectifier valve swap

Weber Copper Cap solid state rectifiers

Verdict

In this article we've tried to concentrate on helping you make best use of what you already have. With the exception of the replacement boards and power scaling kits, none of them even requires a soldering iron. Do remember that working on amps can be extremely dangerous, so if in doubt please consult a professional. Also bear in mind that modifying an amplifier may void any warranty.

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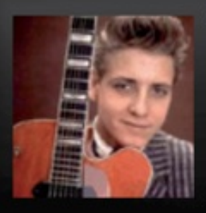

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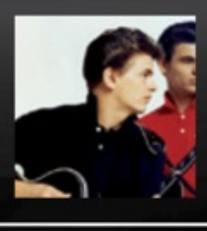

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If you want a real challenge, then get your head around some classic country instrumentals. **Douglas Noble** looks at one of the best in the business

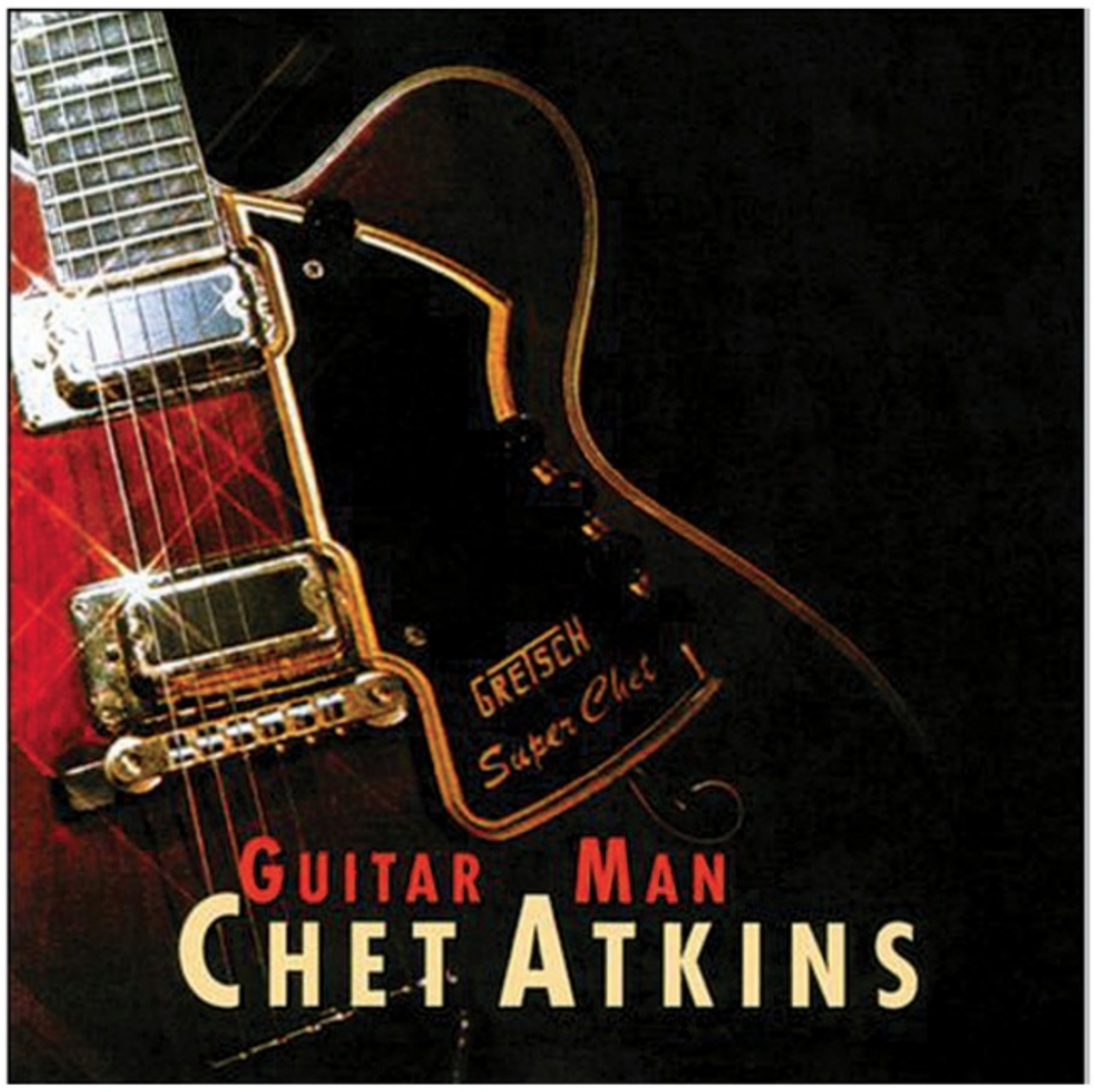
If you're looking for the basic primer in the technique of the wonderful Chet Atkins, then return to G&B 15/11. But to briefly recap the main elements of his style, Atkins based his technique on trying to emulate Merle Travis, a guitarist so influential he had a style of playing named after him – Travis picking. Travis basically plucked the melody on the upper strings with the index finder with the thumb providing alternate bass notes on the beat, while the middle, ring finger and pinky were rested on the scratchplate. Nip over to YouTube, and witness Travis blazing through his classic *Cannonball Rag* at http://tinyurl.com/qz2d6m.

Travis achieved remarkable fluency with this one-finger-plus-thumb technique, and Atkins quite naturally assumed from listening to him – this was long before the days of transcription books, let alone tuition DVDs and the web – that Travis was using more fingers of his plucking hand, since it seemed extremely unlikely than Travis could achieve such results using his index finger only or primarily to pluck the melody.

So Atkins developed a style of playing using the thumb to pluck alternate bass notes, but using the index, middle and ring fingers to pluck the upper notes, in some ways like a classical guitarists. He also wore a thumbpick and rested his pinky lightly on the scratchplate, as can be seen in his version of *Yakety Axe* at http://tinyurl.com/86632wr.

Atkins explained the difference between his and Travis' style. 'While I play alternate bass strings which sounds more like a stride piano style, Merle played two bass strings simultaneously on the one and three beats, producing a more exciting solo rhythm, in my opinion. It was somewhat reminiscent of the great old black players.'

Guitar Man is a compilation album from 2000 made up of solo and accompanied songs from Atkins' early career, including two of Atkins' signature instrumentals – *Yakety Axe* and *Mr Sandman*. Whilst Atkins is known for his fingerpicking, *Yakety Axe* is played



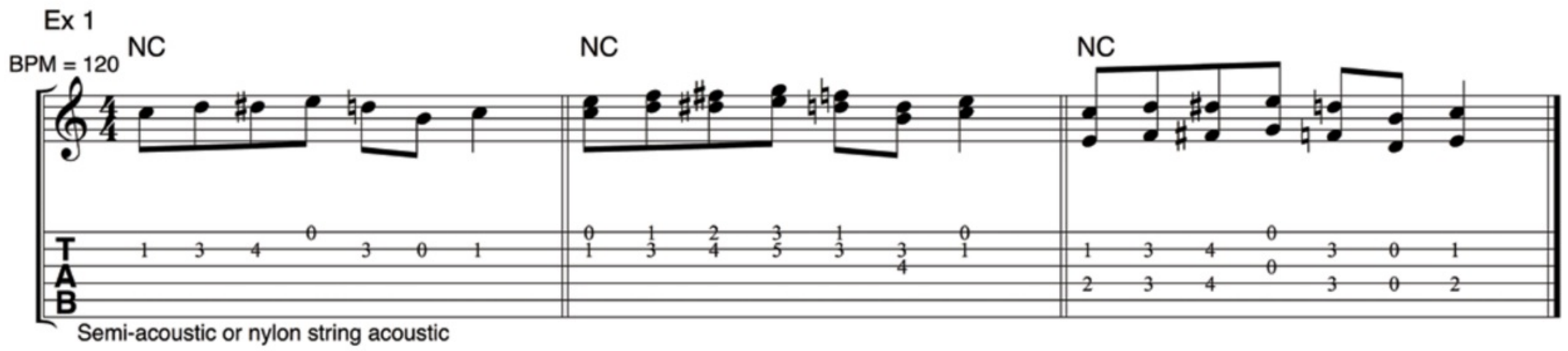
by Atkins in single notes on an electric guitar, with a band providing accompaniment. Atkins adapted *Yakety Axe* from saxophonist Boots Randolph's *Yakety Sax*, which may be more familiar to some as the signature 'chasing tune' of the TV show of the late Benny Hill, a popular comedian before alternative comedy and political correctness cast him into the wilderness. *Mr Sandman* is also a cover, and in fact there is only one Chet Atkins original composition on *Guitar Man*, *Trambone*, which we'll investigate in Ex 2.

1 HARMONISING IN THIRDS AND SIXTHS

4/4 TIME

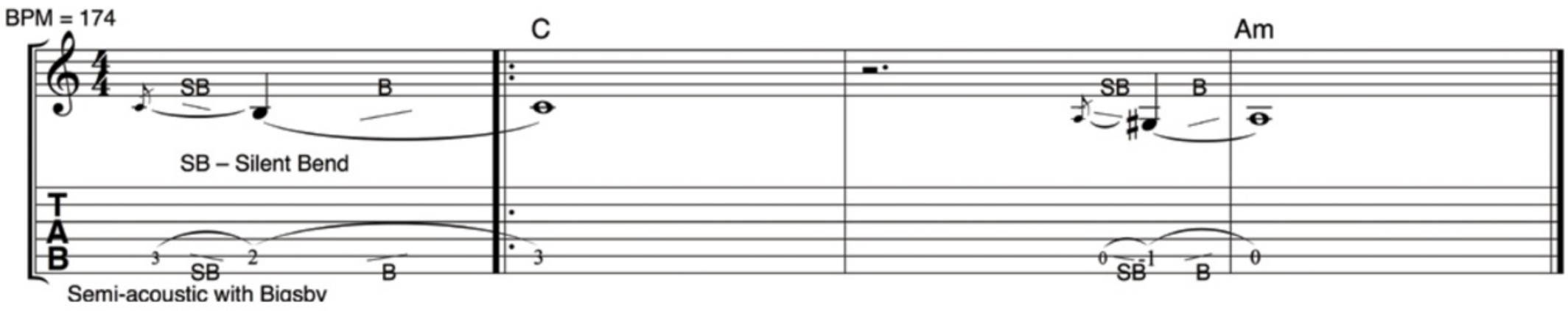
For Chet Atkins, the most important element of a song is the melody, as he once told *G&B*. 'I like playing the melody, and that was very important to me when I learned to play the guitar. I learned to play it in 10 or 15 different ways. I tried to make it sound like there were two or three guitars, playing in octaves or with thirds and sixths. I like to improvise, but somehow I always stay around the melody more than other people.'

This exercise shows a simple melody based on the C major scale, played in single notes in bar one, harmonised in thirds in bar two and harmonised a sixth lower in bar three.

Harmonising in sixths happens to be used in the main melody of Scott Joplin's ragtime standard *The Entertainer*, as can be heard in Atkins' version at 0:12. Atkins plays this instrumental in dropped D tuning (D A D G B E), and listen closely to the tone – Atkins is playing this on a nylon-strung guitar.

2 BIGSBY VIBRATO

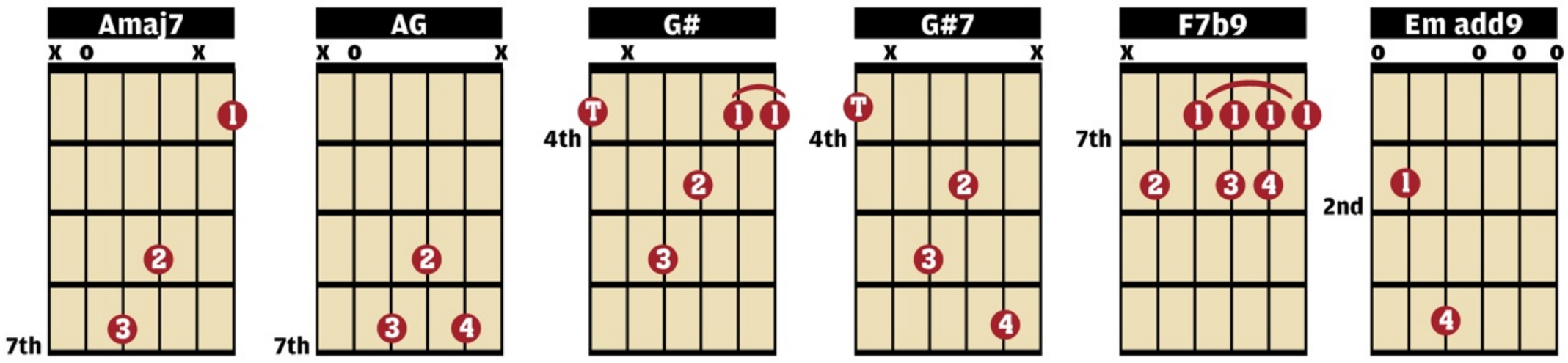
4/4 TIME

Atkins uses the legendary Bigsby vibrato unit to ascend to the root notes in the intro of *Trambone*, the only Atkins original on *Guitar Man*. *Trambone* is based on a stock I VIm IV V chord progression in the key of C – so that's C, Am, F, G. The exercise shows an illustration of this technique. 'SB', as shown in the music, means 'Silent Bend' . Depress your Bigsby or vibrato arm so the string descends by one fret's worth, strike the string, then release the vibrato arm and let the note naturally return to pitch. It may take some practise to depress the arm accurately, getting used to the feel for exactly how far to depress it to allow for a semitone raise.



3 Amaj7, A6, G#, G#7, F7b9 AND Emadd9 CHORDS

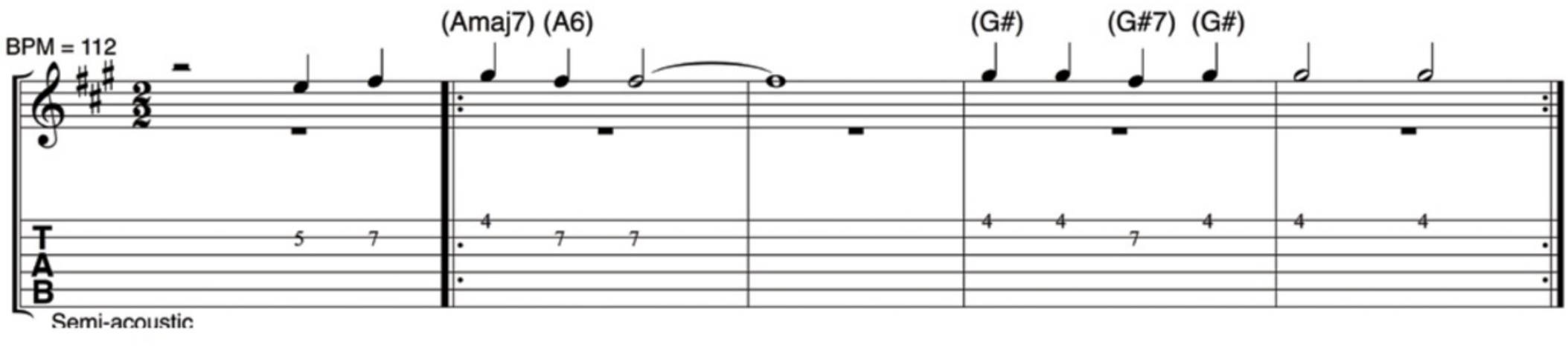
These chords are gong to be used in the following examples. The omitted second string in Amaj7 isn't a problem since it's going to be plucked with the fingers rather than strummed. A6 is fingered as it is here since it comes after Amaj7, and thus uses the same fingers on strings four and three to make for a smooth change. G# and G#7 both use the thumb to come over the back of the neck to hold down the bottom string, fourth fret. F7b9 is slightly awkward to finger; make sure all five notes can be heard clearly. Emadd9 is easier to finger, but make sure the fourth finger does not touch the third string so that the third string can be sounded clearly.



4 SINGLE NOTE MELODY

2/2 TIME

Play the melody as written, ignoring the bracketed chords – it's similar to the melody of *Mr Sandman*. Then, finger the chords from Ex 3 as indicated above the notation, and pluck the same melody from the top of the chords (the chord voicings from Ex 3 will do this for you). This will prepare the ground for playing melody and accompaniment at the same time when we get to Exercise 5.



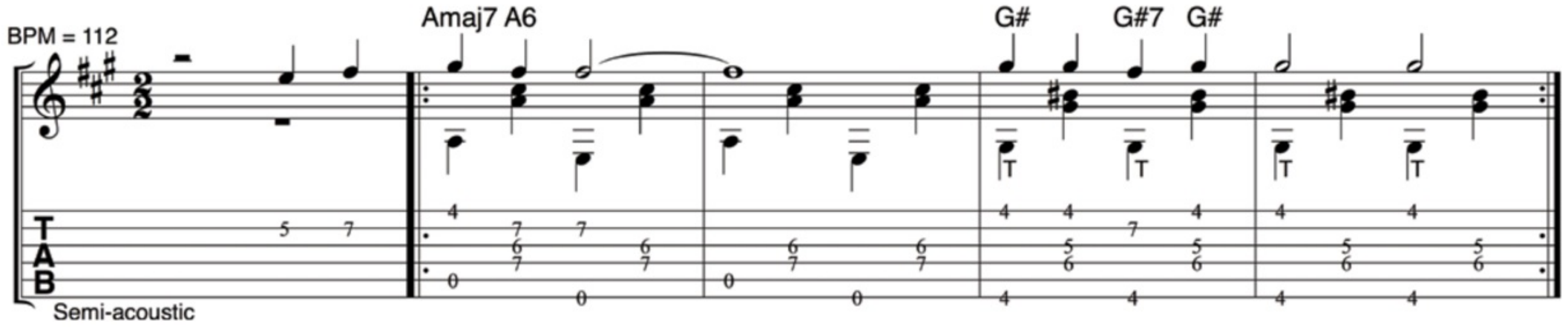
CHET ATKINS' EQUIPMENT

As a pioneering and influential guitarist, it's not surprising that Chet Atkins had several signature guitar models named after him. The cover of *Guitar Man* shows a Gretsch Super Chet, a relatively rare instrument made in the 1970s in various configurations such as with or without the Bigsby vibrato system. Atkins can be heard using the Bigsby in *Trambone* for the semitone bends into root notes – see Ex 2. Gretsch made several other Chet Atkins signature models, again available in various configurations.

***The Entertainer*, as cited in Ex 1, is played on a nylon string guitar. Gibson made a Chet Atkins CE (Classical Electric) and Chet Atkins CEC (Classical Electric Cutaway), both starting production in 1981. Generally speaking, Atkins preferred old guitars. 'I think they have a prettier sound. Guitar builders were more careful in those days with the bracing and the thickness of the top, and I think they used a different glue which was not as hard and gave a sweeter sound.' He also favoured semi-acoustics or nylon-string acoustics over steel-strung acoustic guitars. 'I have a few, but I've generally used them only as rhythm guitars on other people's records.'**

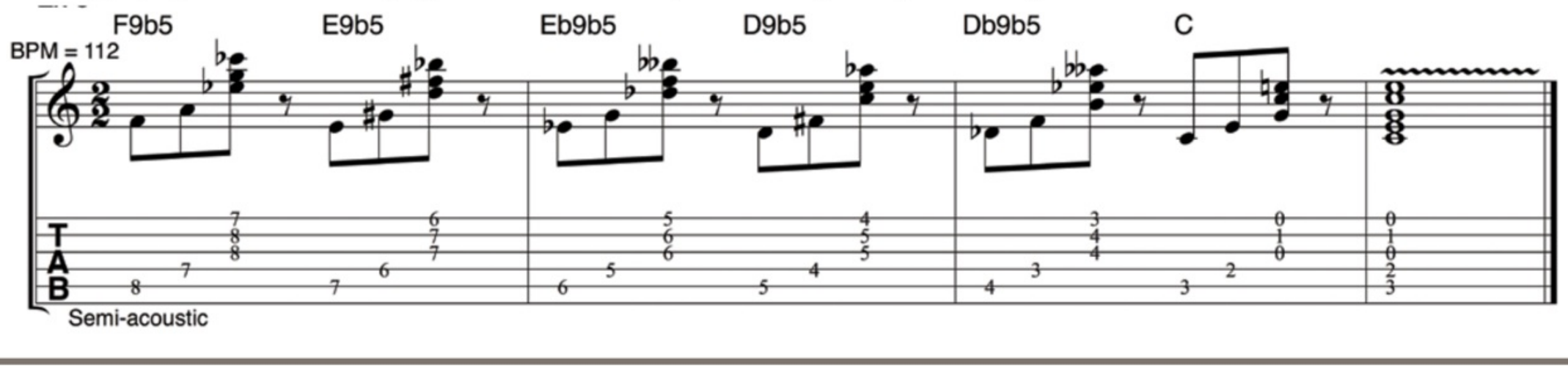
5 MR SANDMAN-STYLE CHORD AND MELODY

2/2 TIME

Using the first four chords from Ex 3 and the melody from Ex 4, this example is similar to the main melody of *Mr Sandman* and illustrates Atkins' picking technique. Notice the alternate bass pattern used with each chord: with Amaj7 the bass alternates between open A and bottom open E, and with G# and G#7 it alternates between G# on the fourth fret, fretted with the thumb, and G# on the fourth string, sixth fret. These bass notes are plucked with the thumb, and the additional harmony notes on beats two and four with the index. Practise slowly and gradually work up to speed, and perhaps work on one bar at a time.

6 JAZZ INFLUENCE

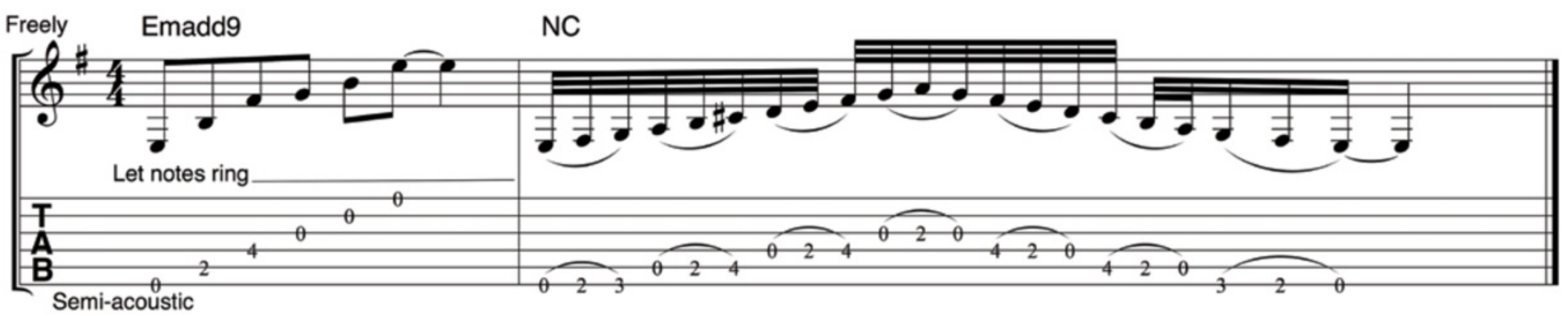
2/2 TIME

The end section of *Mr Sandman* shows Chet Atkins' jazz influence. He moves the F9b5 shape from Ex 3 chromatically down the fretboard, playing the chord as an arpeggio. You can hear this clearly at the 2:08 point in the tune. Remember, pluck with thumb and three fingers; use the thumb to pluck strings five and four, then the fingers to pluck the top three strings. The progression ends with a basic open C chord at the bottom of the fretboard and is indicated to be treated with the vibrato arm.

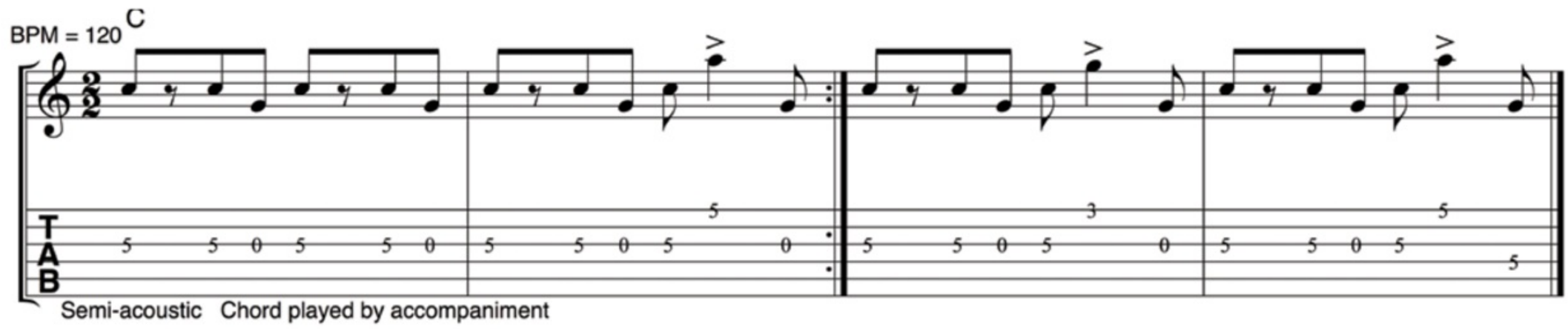


7 TAKE FIVE CADENZA

4/4 TIME

Atkins plays his version of Dave Brucker's jazz standard *Take Five* with a fairly straight bat, ending with a drawn out arpeggiation of the evocative Emadd9 from Ex 3. This is followed by a flurry of notes up and down the E Dorian mode (E F# G A B C# D E), with Atkins generally plucking only the first note on each string then slurring the others either with hammer-ons or pull-offs. The whole exercise is indicated to be played 'freely', so make the most of contrasting the drawn-out arpeggio with the flashy mode passage.

8 SQUAWKING LICK FROM YAKETY AXE

2/2 TIME

Atkins plays a passage in *Yakety Axe* starting at 0:52 similar which sounds like squawking. Listen closely to the phrasing: some of the open G's are barely perceptible, making them almost like ghost notes, and the high notes are accented. So, even when playing a relatively simple passage in single notes like this one, Atkins' phrasing creates the illusion of more than one guitar.

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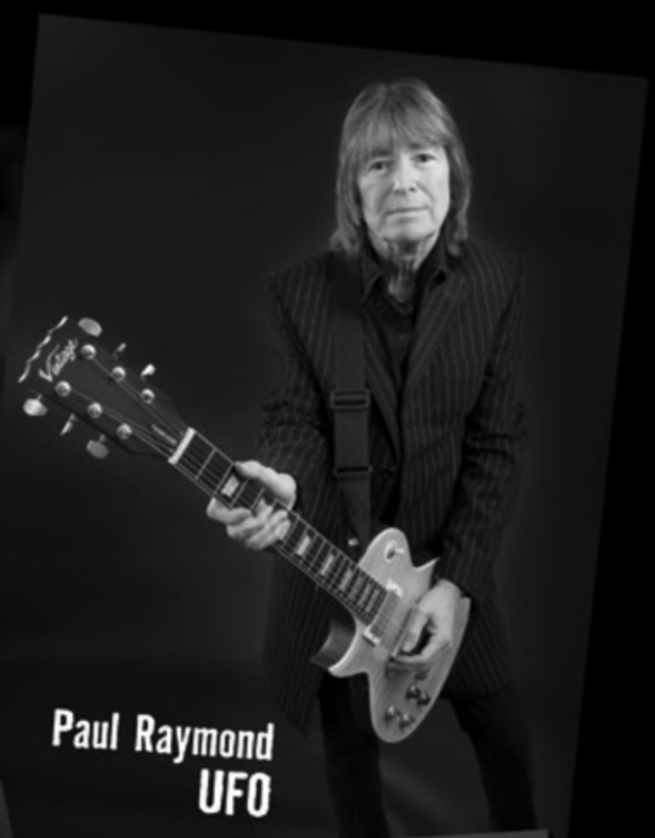
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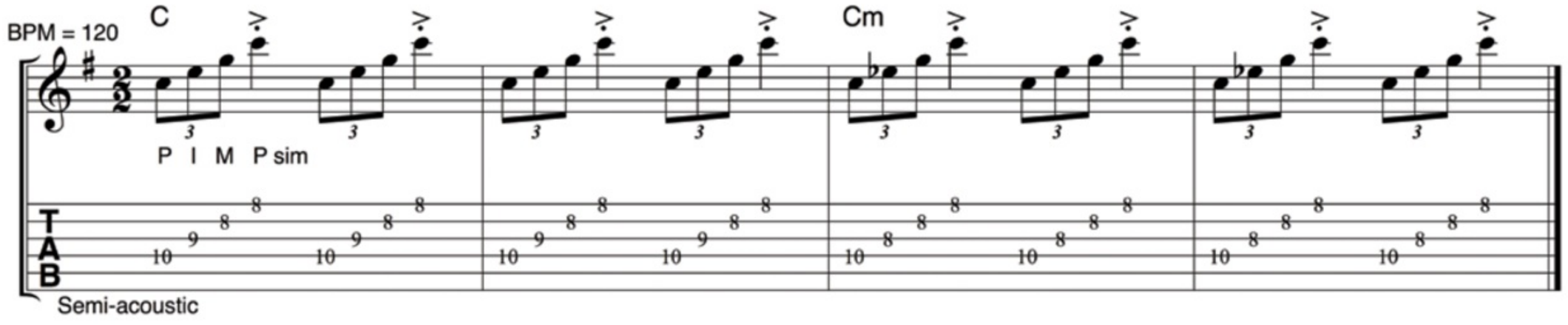
9 SWEEP PICKING

2/2 TIME

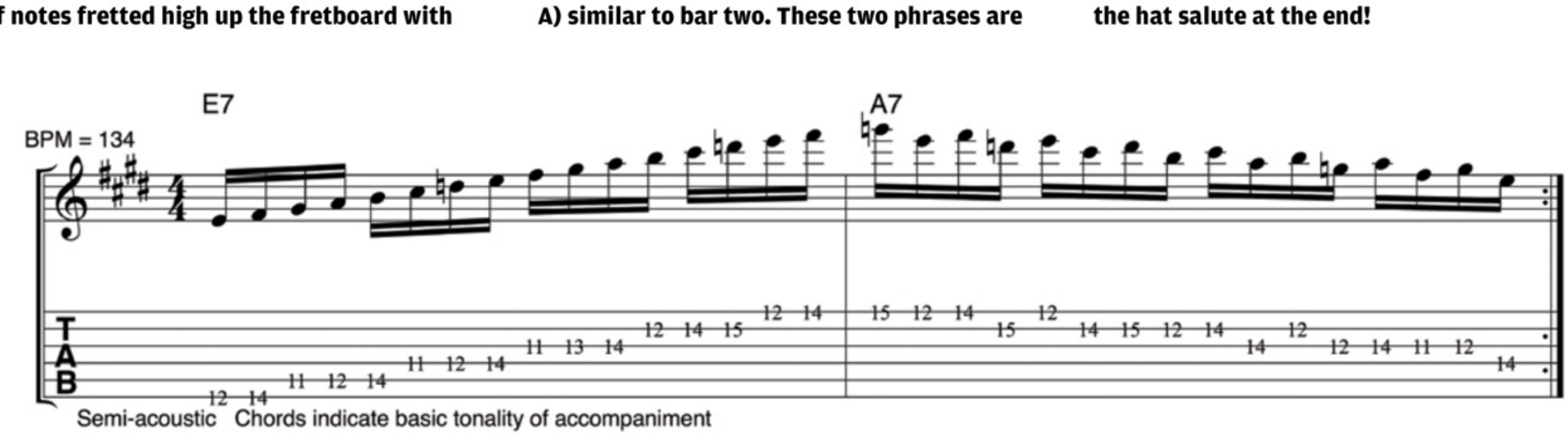
While sweep picking tends to be associated with modern fusion guitarists like Frank Gambale and neo-classicist rockers such as Yngwie Malmsteen, fellas like Chet Atkins were doing it much, much earlier. This ninth exercise shows this technique outlining a C to Cm chord progression, similar to *Yakety Axe* at 0:44. No need for chord diagrams here; Atkins plays these arpeggios in a rather unconventional way, plucking the four notes in the following order: thumbpick, index, middle, thumbpick – so the thumbpick picks both the first and last notes. This means the thumbpick has to move really quickly and accurately between the fourth and top strings, but it helps Atkins to give the top note an accent. As well as doing this, you need to use the conventional sweep picking technique with the fretting hand of lifting the fingers after each note has been struck so only one note is heard at a time.



10 JERRY'S BREAKDOWN SCALE PATTERN

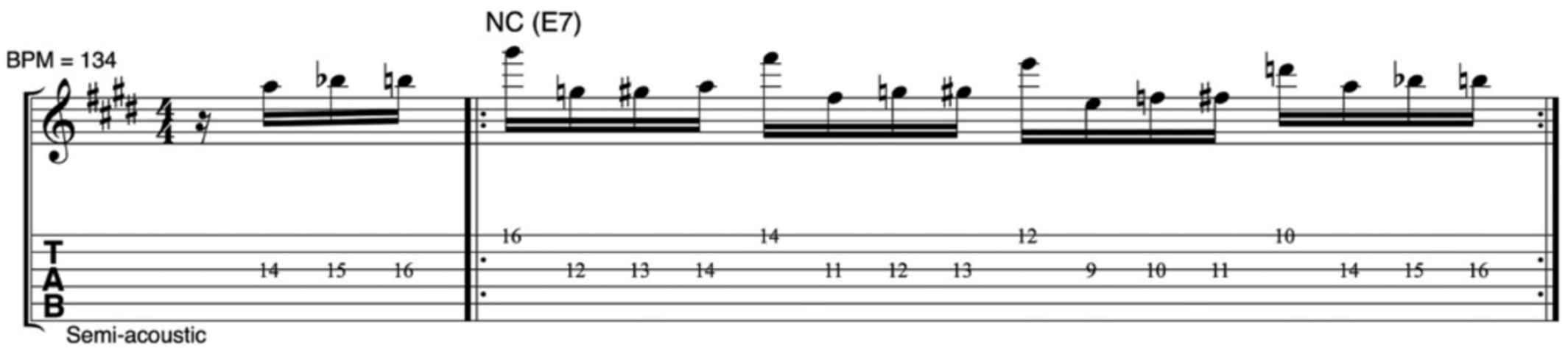
4/4 TIME

It takes a brave man to duet with country picker Jerry Reed, but that's exactly what Atkins did on Reed's instrumental *Jerry's Breakdown*. Reed starts the song with cascades of flowing, overlapping sixteenth notes, using fingerpicking and a combination of notes fretted high up the fretboard with open strings, achieving remarkable fluency. Atkins follows the interlude section at 1:03 with a straight run up the E mixolydian mode (E F# G# A B C# D E) at 1:07 similar to bar one of the exercise, followed by a pattern initially using the A mixolydian mode (A B C# D E F# G A) similar to bar two. These two phrases are intended to be practised as a loop here – as usual, start slowly then build up speed. Remember, Atkins played these runs with thumb pick and fingers. Atkins can be seen playing this tune with Reed in a glorious old TV show clip at http://tinyurl.com/ybcywb. Note the hat salute at the end!



11 JERRY'S BREAKDOWN LICK

4/4 TIME

Atkins plays a passage at 1:21 of *Jerry's Breakdown* based on a three-note chromatic ascending pattern on the third string followed by a note on the top string. Again remember, Atkins plucks passages like this with thumbpick and fingers – try plucking each group of four notes thumb pick, index, thumb pick for the third string, then middle finger for the top string. Notice how the exercise uses two slightly different patterns between the third and top strings. The phrase shown in the exercise would work over an E7 chord.

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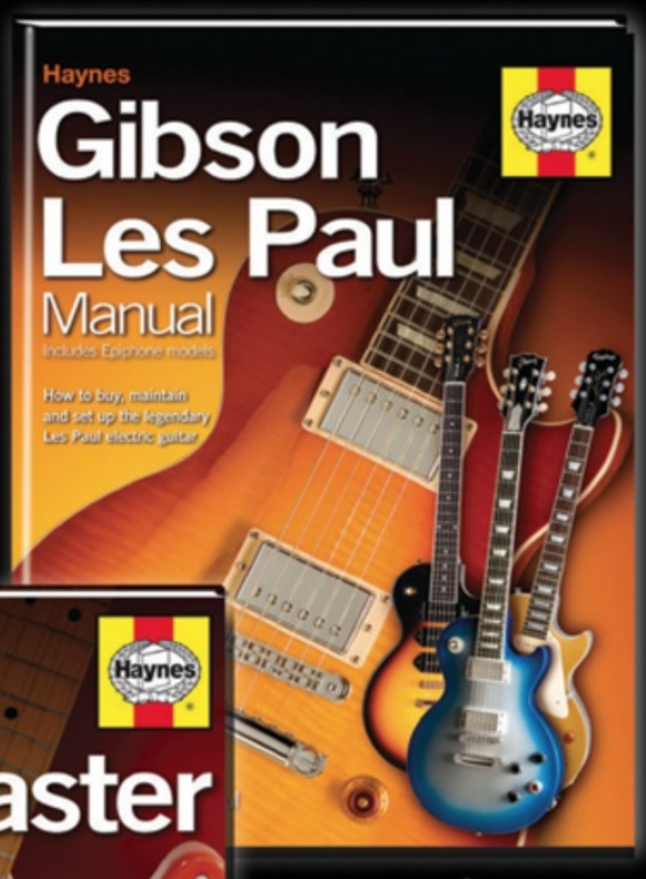

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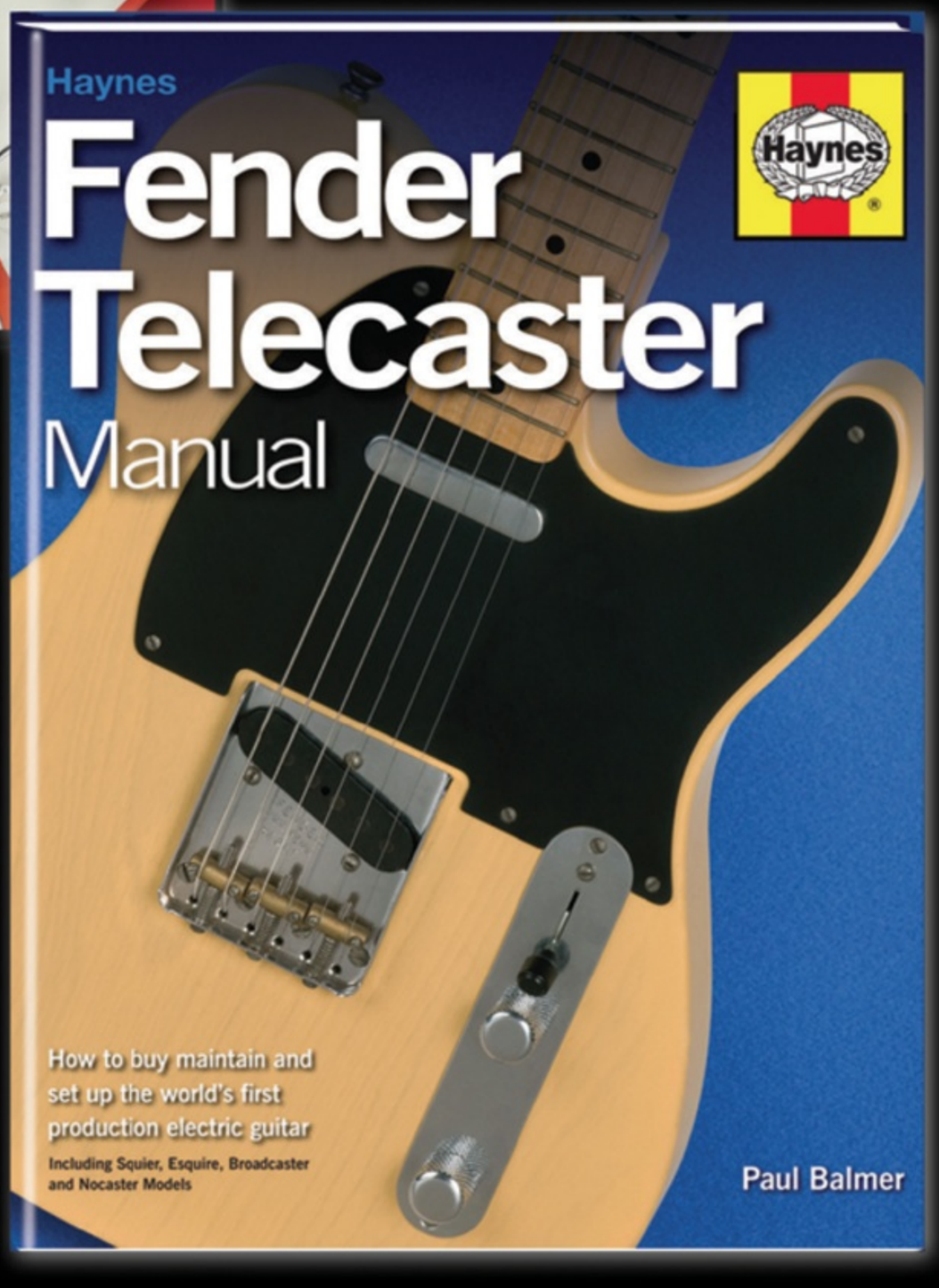

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John Entwistle

Who's Next finds the Who bassist at his brilliant best, serving the song yet pushing and embellishing to create a vital part of the whole. Gareth Morgan dissects the work of the Ox

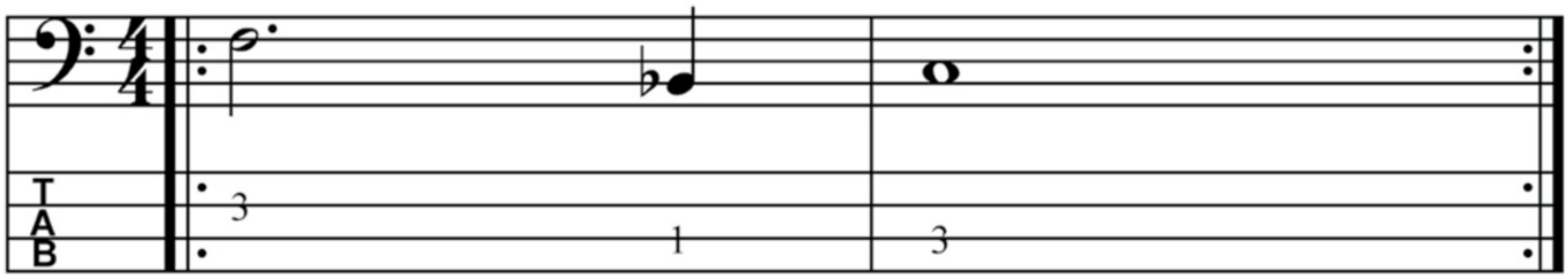
When the time came for the Who to record their fifth studio album, guitarist and main songwriter Pete Townshend began developing a concept for a project titled *Lifehouse*, an extravagant undertaking slated to include a feature film, theatre event, song cycle, double album and concert performance. This multi-dimensional concept piece never reached fruition, but a selection of songs from this period were released as the album *Who's Next* in 1971, a triple platinum-selling collection that is undeniably the band's finest hour.

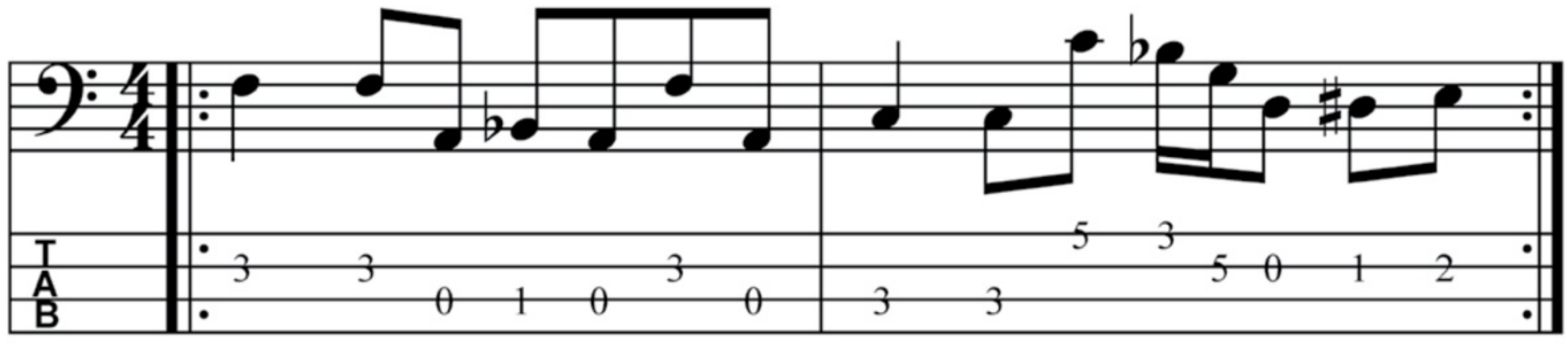
The album finds the whole band on top form throughout but bassist John Entwistle seemed to especially relish the varied textures, rhythmic nuances and feeling of space within Townshend's new songs, and nor was he fazed by the introduction of new-fangled synthesisers. His own writing contribution, *My Wife*, is a hard-rocking story of marital misunderstanding, one of the most cohesive he recorded with the Who and a song which contains the most melodically simple bassline on the album. Townshend was farsighted enough to recognise that Entwistle was at his best when he was afforded the freedom to play the way he wanted to, and while it's arguable that Entwistle betrayed this trust regularly in a live context, on *Who's Next* his playing is just about perfect: when the song required mainly root notes, he delivered, when a sweet melody in an interlude or one to introduce the song is needed or constantly evolving melodic fills are required, Entwistle happily provides these. There's also the occasional super-charged fill, although with Keith Moon and his propensity for the wild and rhythmically complex, Entwistle had to play in a certain way at certain times when he may not have really wanted to.

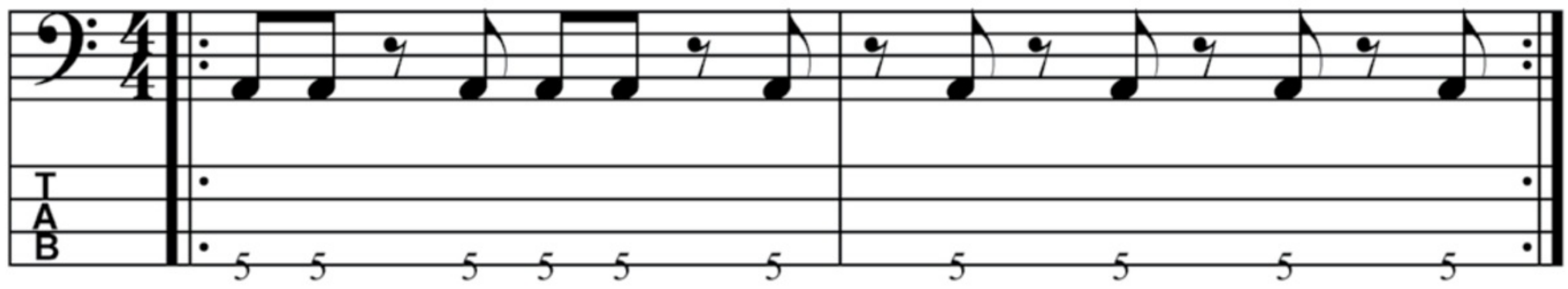
We have producer Glyn Johns to thank for the album's well-balanced, full-range bass sound. Although Entwistle claims 'we always disagreed about the sound of my bass,' the tone on *Who's Next* fills plenty of space. In fact, other than the odd audibility issue, it's close to the perfect hard rock bass sound. Judging by photographs, Entwistle played either a Fender Precision or Gibson Thunderbird. Whichever bass he used, he is simply awesome throughout.

Photo: Elaine White/Rex Features

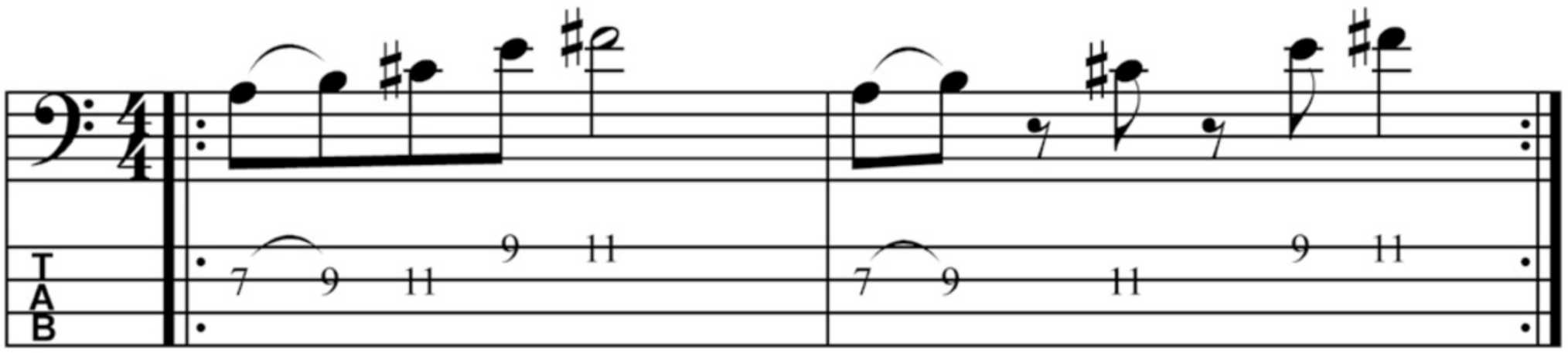
1 BASIC ROOT-NOTE MOVEMENT — 4/4 TIME

Because his tone was so good throughout *Who's Next*, even Entwistle's simplest bass parts seem to have a majestic aura and consequently sound far more sophisticated than they actually are. You won't find much in the way of simple no-frills playing anywhere on *Who's Next* but, as this is the one and only John Entwistle, you shouldn't expect to. Aside from *My Wife*, one other excellent example of simplicity is the first verse from *Baba O'Reilly* and we've tried to get you close to it with our first example.

2 RHYTHMIC AND MELODIC DEVELOPMENT — 4/4 TIME

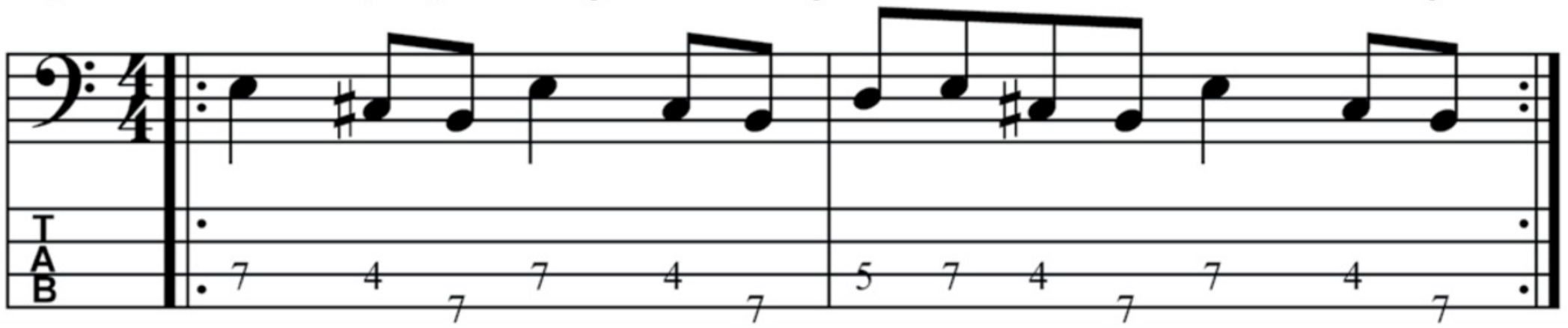
Entwistle always loved to take off and improvise and this, alongside his amazing technical proficiency, makes learning his basslines a complete nightmare for anybody. Take a look at our second example, which is based on the way in which he develops the initially simple idea on the aforementioned *Baba O'Reilly*. The added movement in the bass really lifts the song, but if you listen hard enough you'll hear him developing his part towards this point from the around the middle of the first verse.

3 SYNCOPATED ROOT-NOTE PART — 4/4 TIME

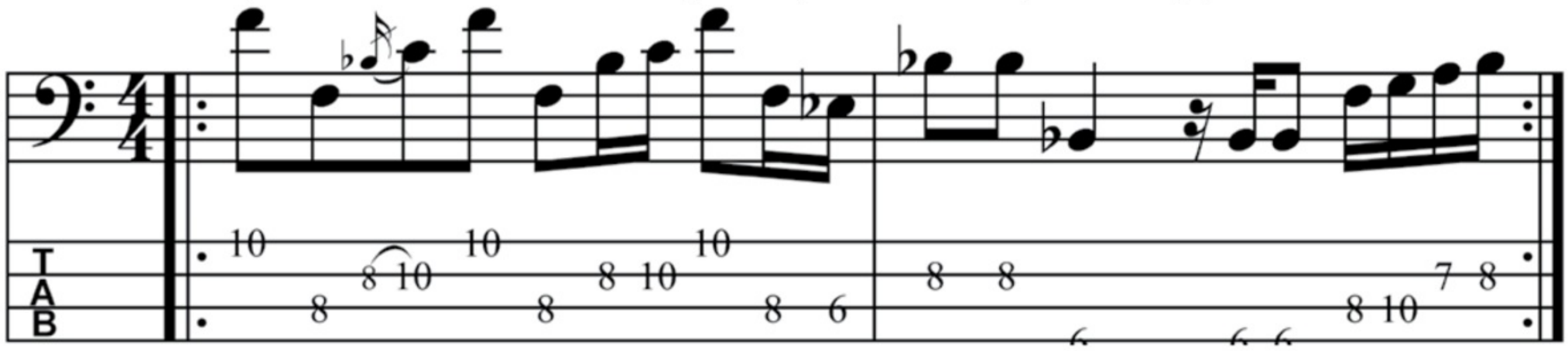
As we've mentioned, Entwistle delivers the melodically simplest bassline on *Who's Next* on his own composition, *My Wife*. Whether this is down to the obvious fact that he's also singing it or whether he just 'heard it' this way is impossible to tell, but the outcome is that he sticks to root notes for the vast majority of the song. The interest here comes from the rhythmic content, and what we find is a two-bar pattern where beat one of the first bar is stated but the emphasis for the rest of the cycle is very much off the beat.

4 SIMPLE PENTATONIC MELODY — 4/4 TIME

***Who's Next* contains some of Townshend's most enduring compositions, songs which the Who still play on stage to this day. Aside from *Baba O'Reilly*, the most notable of these is the eight and a half-minute epic that closes the original album, *Won't Get Fooled Again*. *Won't Get Fooled*... sits on a static chord for long periods of time, providing Entwistle with masses of space within which to weave his bubbling improvisations. Here we'll get you close to the simple, pentatonic scale-based melodic hook he delivers in the chorus.**

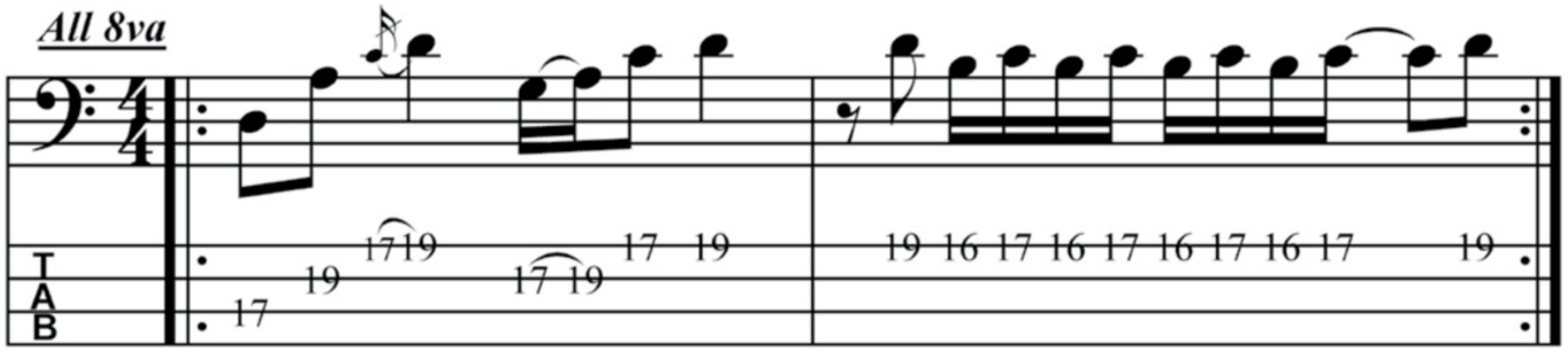


5 COUNTRY WITH A TWIST — 4/4 TIME

If you removed Keith Moon's idiosyncratic rhythmic brilliance from the equation, many of the songs recorded by the Who would have a completely different feel. For instance, *Going Mobile* would be a country blues, enlivened by Townshend's acoustic guitar work and high tenor vocals. Add Moon to the equation and the song is far more exciting and less predictable. Through all this Entwistle bubbles along beneath, delivering an authentic bassline that pushes hard – and also features some cool variations under the guitar solo.

6 BUSY ROOT/OCTAVE LINE WITH MAJOR SCALE FILL — 4/4 TIME

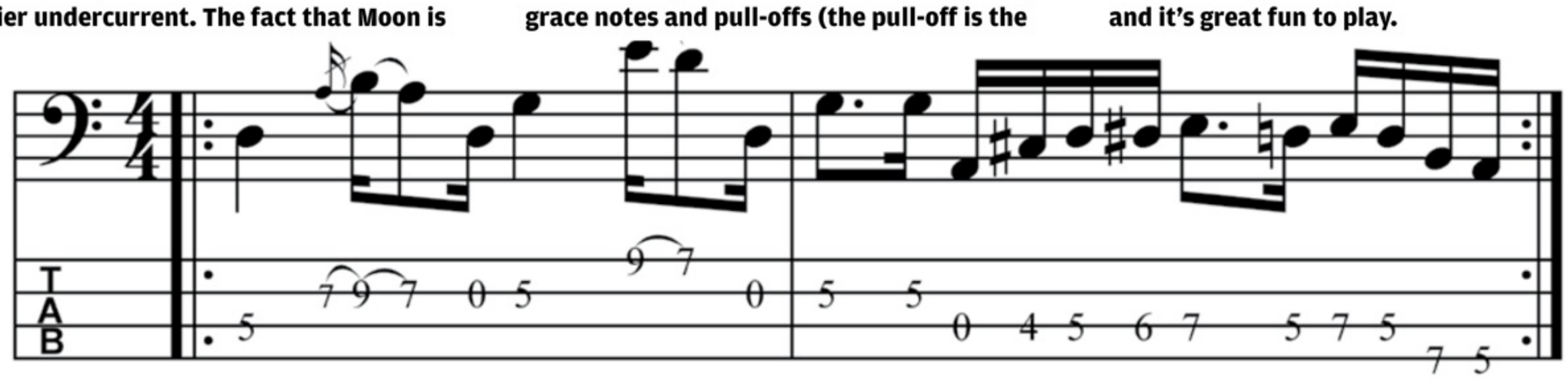
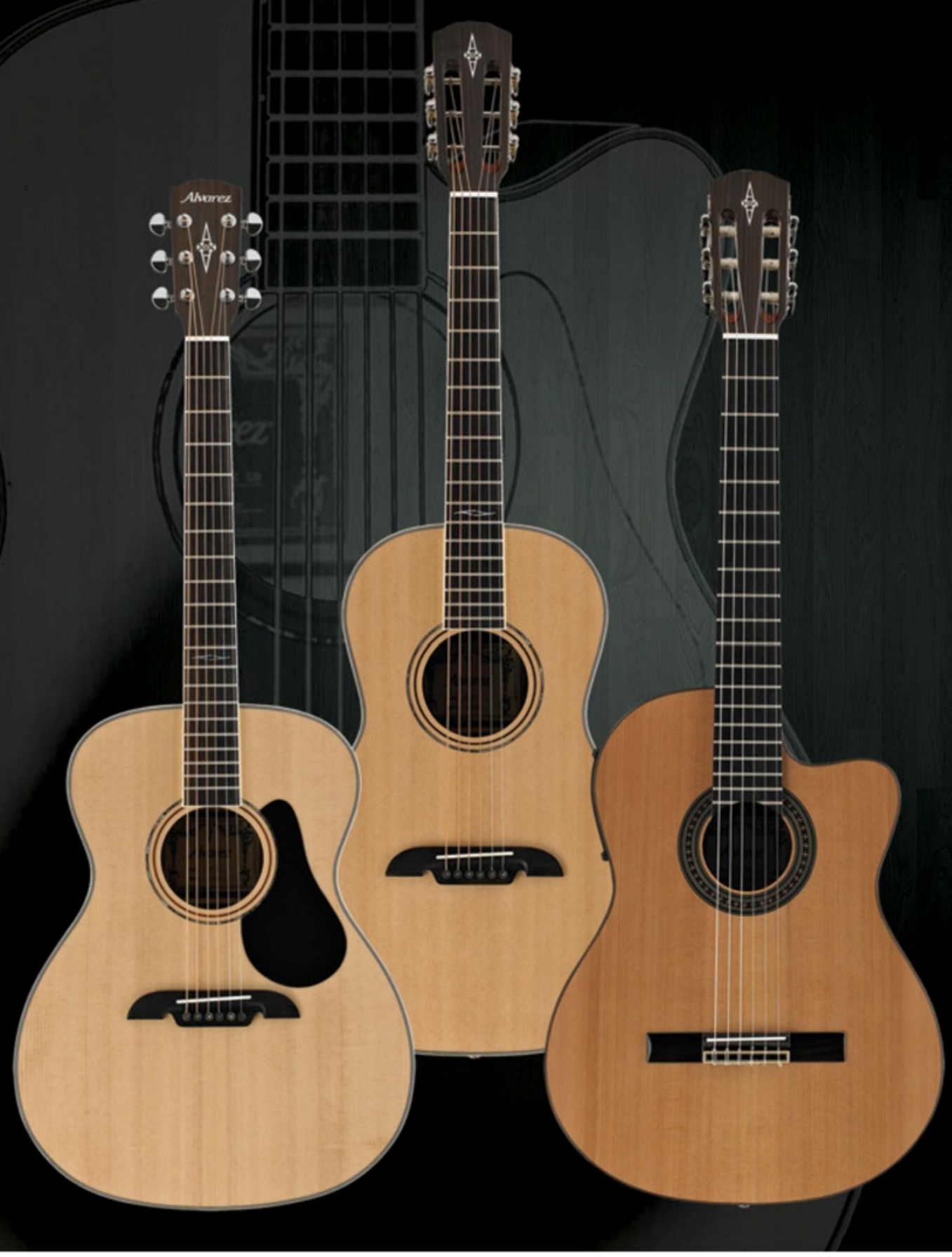
There's no denying the excellence of Entwistle's bass work on *Who's Next*. As well as his usual fretboard dexterity, the quality of the ideas and the more simple variations is absolutely top-notch: this is a man right at the top of his game. Our sixth example is based on the main bass part from *Getting In Tune* which is based mainly on roots, fifths and octaves, Entwistle skilfully knitting these basic note choices together with some cool scalar melodies to create a spiky, funky groove that's a real joy to behold.

7 HIGH REGISTER FILL — 4/4 TIME

Entwistle utilises the higher registers to great effect on *Who's Next*. There's the sweet, unaccompanied groove on the breakdown in *Bargain*, and how about the beautiful descending idea on the intro of *Getting In Tune*? Both are pretty special, but it's on *The Song Is Over* that he really lets rip up the dusty end. During the sections sung by Roger Daltrey he produces a number of variations on an initial theme, all of which are played way above the 12th fret. Have fun with our version of one of them.



8 PULL-OFFS, CHROMATIC APPROACHES AND SCALAR FILLS — 4/4 TIME

Our final example is based on Entwistle's main part from *Love Ain't For Keeping*, another song with a country hue but one that has a much funkier undercurrent. The fact that Moon is fairly restrained for the full two minutes certainly helps the feel here and allows Entwistle to play little melodic spikes using grace notes and pull-offs (the pull-off is the opposite of a hammer-on) with each phrase being given time to speak clearly. It's one of the most singable basslines he ever recorded, and it's great fun to play.



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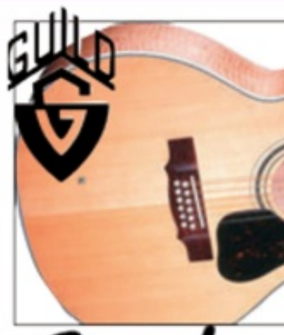
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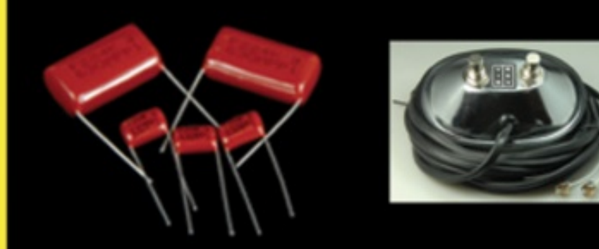

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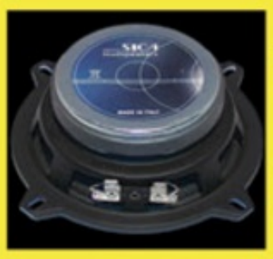

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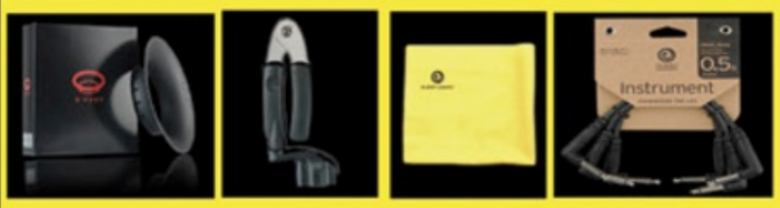

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The Harma ECC83-Retro Cryo is a true sounding recreation of the Mullard ECC83. These specially selected Cryo Retro preamp kits will provide the classic British crunch, with Mullard style warm mids, but without any fizz or harshness. The Cryo version has a smoother distortion more detail and clarity .They also have more bite and punch over the standard version .Each valve is selected for gain, output and low noise and each set includes a balanced valve for the phase inverter position with no extra charge for High gain sets.

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TAD EL34BCryo	£26.40	JJ 6L6GC Cryo	£24.00
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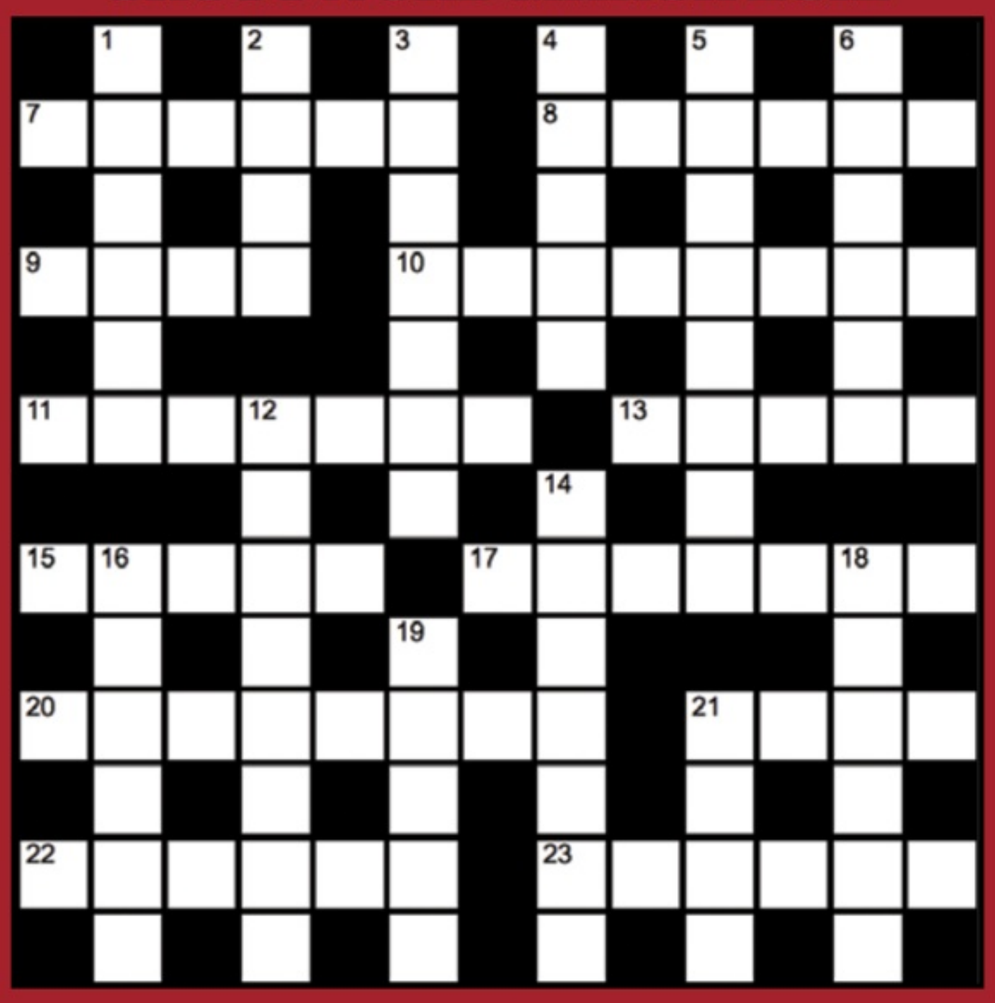

ACROSS

7. Slavic shine (6)
8. Brothers of Jessica (6)
9. A dollar from REM (4)
10. Response may be sustaining (8)
11. Lawfully friend follows limb (7)
13. Borrows against game pieces (5)
15. So a mix is made of Manchester band (5)
17. Musicians' maturity can dress wounds (7)
20. George wrote Something (8)
21. One of 15 across or The Experience (4)
22. Mode of Oscar's Gray character (6)
23. Left hand technique from the toolbox (6)
22. Gain attempt from cold weather (6)

DOWN

1. Five love early instrument headstock joint support (6)
2. Get tongue round stock phrase (4)
3. Swing rhythm for mixing deck (7)
4. Mr Graham king of DADGAD (5)
5. Wood put down in district for nightlife / Wood realm is area for nightlife (8)
6. Gretch oddly seen in golf ball account (6)
12. Can I rid a form of pollution from Dream Theater? (4,4)
14. Racy? Gets worse with hun! (7)
16. Fighting woman from on line store (6)
18. Bloke from Sabbath (6)
19. Employing part of impromptu sing-a-along (5)
21. Lost feeling at start of digit / Start of piece ends comfortably from Floyd (4)

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Tanglewood master design TSR2 electro acoustic, good condition, custom SKB case £950. Tony agellam@btopenworld.com 07880 698370 Suffolk

Yamaha AE500 archtop, hardly played, £250. Tel Derek 01244 545 654, North Wales

Gibson J-45, 1963, cherry sunburst, near mint, Grover tuners fitted (1964), Fishman Rare Earth Blend, Hiscox case, £3000. Tel: 01429 296 413, Teesside

Eggle Vienna Plus, 1996, see-through redburst, hardly used from new, immaculate, OHSC. £950 ono. Photos available. Cambridge area. Contact keithday@ntlworld.com or call 01223 247639.

Fender Classic Strat, mega-rare shell pink '60s model, rosewood neck, aged parts, made 2001, very few in the UK, as new and unused, £350, can post, pics available, contact Ian at debbyian17@yahoo.co.uk, tel 01424 434034, East Sussex

Bass Collection SX bass guitar, Dark blue metallic, £150 ono. Tel: 01282 606 649, Nelson Lancs, contact bdmrobinson@hotmail.co.uk

Taylor 412K acoustic with undersaddle pickup, includes Taylor fitted case, a few minor dings to the neck but otherwise great condition, £700 ono. Tel: Steve 01952 277 975, Shropshire

1930s twin-neck lap steel, aluminium and Bakelite, hand-painted finish, possibly unique early English electric, £1200. Tel: Gary 020 8207 5015 or Fiona.zg@sky.com for jpegs

Gallato acoustic gypsy guitar, engraved machine heads and tailpiece, oval soundhole, cutaway, rosewood back and sides, mint condition, hard case, £1300. Tel: Ray 01702 526515

Hohner G3T headless guitar with deluxe gigbag, unplayed and mint. Tel Mike, 01209 218663 or 07772 568733

Fender 600 valve amp, 5W, immaculate condition, £95 plus postage. Korg floor pedal tuner, good condition, true bypass, £30. Email terry.nightingale@hotmail.com, Lancs area

JooDee bass, new strings, soft case £200 ono. Tel 01548 852850, South Devon

Burns Vista Sonic bass, 1963, owned virtually from new, original strings, setup available, non-orig case. Offers over £2000. Tel: Dave, 01484 536908

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Tonerider Rocksong humbuckers, pair, black, Alnico 2, bridge 12K, neck 8K, boxed, springs, screws, £35. Tel: 0151 259 7663 or 07799 365072

Left-handed Squier Strat Standard, sunburst, RW, vgc, £150. Left-handed Bear tenor acoustic guitar, gigbag, vgc, £100. Tel Judith, 01326 565121 or 07952 155083, West Cornwall

Watkins solid state tape echo, wood case, footswitch, spare tapes, £120 ono, South Devon

WANTED

Epiphone Noel Gallagher Union Jack, call Steve, 07803 116060, kayst.fencing@ntlworld.com, Bedfordshire

Bass cab to match Selmer Treble & Bass 50, scruffy ok but must work and cheap. Tel: Tony, 07691 655 481

Bass badge for 1963 Vox AC30, Tel: Mark, 07910 374457

Fender USA '62 reissue Strat. Tel: 01992 462640 or email r.hill3@sky.com

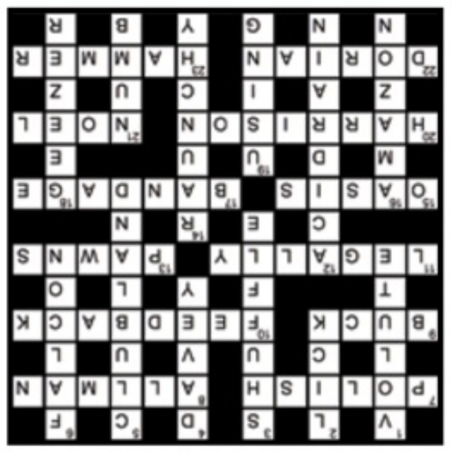
Bass starter pack with amp wanted, £100 tops. Tel: Oliver, 07913 625193, Pinder

Danelectro Corned Beef reverb, call Mel, 01986 782 383

Arbiter d/c Gibson or SG Jr, Peavey Classic 100W head. Tel: Stef 07736 046937

Gibson Jeff Beck Oxblood Les Paul, call Phil, 07742 067 827 or phil.m6@btopenworld

Crossword answers



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BACKSTAGE

Did you know, in the month of March...

March 1948 ... Ted McCarty joins Gibson and changes the legendary company forever

McCarty was not a musician, but he did have a degree in engineering and had overseen manufacturing at Wurlitzer – which historically had been the biggest instrument builder in the US. He soon instigated Gibson's boldest forays into the electric guitar market, making key design contributions to the Les Paul, ES-335 and an early detachable pickup that came to bear his name. Ted presided over Gibson's golden era, eventually leaving to buy Bigsby in 1966. It's only in recent years the company has managed to recreate anything close to McCarty's success.

1965 ... Eric Clapton leaves the Yardbirds

Clapton was unhappy with the choice of *For Your Love* for the next single, considering the song too commercial and too far removed from the blues they played live. He was also miffed that session musicians had played virtually all the instruments on the record. Singer Keith Relf quipped: 'He loves the blues so much I suppose he didn't like it being played badly by a white shower like us!' On 26 March, Jeff Beck took Clapton's place.

1968 ... Chuck Berry's *Johnny B Goode* hits the record stores

Berry has always claimed that the lyrics are autobiographical, although he grew up on Goode Street in St. Louis rather than a wood cabin deep down in Louisiana – and unlike the hero of the song Chuck learned to read and write with ease, although bizarrely he opted for 'beauty school', earning a degree in hairdressing and cosmetology. Pianist Lafayette Leake played on the record, though the 'Johnny' in the song was named after the bandleader of Berry's first group, piano player Johnnie Johnson, who later titled his debut album *Johnnie B Bad*.

1980 ... Ned Steinberger is granted a patent on his new graphite L2 bass guitar

When the iconic L2 was launched at NAMM, one immediately went to John Entwistle. The L2 quickly garnered an inclusion in *Time*'s 'Five Best Designs of 1981'. By 1982, demand had exceeded supply by 300 per cent, forcing the company to relocate. By 1987 Gibson had bought Steinberger and would supply a host of headless axemen including Mike Rutherford and Quo's John 'Rhino' Edwards.

1964 ... Jimi Hendrix joins the Isley Brothers

Eighteen months after being discharged from the army Hendrix boarded a Greyhound bus to New York. Within three months he had landed a gig with the Isleys and even recorded a number of singles with them. He jumped ship several months later, complaining about the band's 'white mohair suits, patent leather shoes and patent leather hairstyles'.

1951 ... Les Paul releases *How High The Moon*, made with his multi-track system

Les had been given an Ampex 200 reel-to-reel audio tape recorder by his friend Bing Crosby. It was the first commercially available machine of its kind, and Les Paul's unit was only the second one off the production line. Les built in an extra recording head and added circuitry which allowed multiple tracks to be recorded separately onto the same reel of tape for the very first time – a modification that made him the father of multi-track recording. The record went to #1 and sold 1.5 million copies. In 1953 Les is reported to have paid from his own pocket to help Ampex develop the world's first eight-track recorder.

1986 ... Cheesy '80s guitar movie *Crossroads* hits the big screen with the help of Arlen Roth, Steve Vai and Ry Cooder

Classical guitar student Ralph Macchio wants to be a bluesman and seeks out surviving Robert Johnson cohort Willie Brown. The pair bond on a road trip to rediscover the legendary crossroads where Brown and Johnson sold their souls to the devil. The climax has Macchio having to save his and Brown's soul in a guitar duel with Steve Vai, playing the part of another of Satan's protégés. Completely ludicrous, but still embarrassingly compulsive.

1974 ... Ex-Spider From Mars guitarist Mick Ronson releases his debut solo album *Slaughter On 10th Avenue*

Up until this point Ronson had been best known for his work as David Bowie's sidekick, playing on many of the glam rocker's seminal releases. Bowie wrote or co-wrote three tracks here, although the album opens, bizarrely, with a gutsy cover of Elvis' *Love Me Tender* and ends with the title track, taken from a ballet of the same name. The songs were laid down at the Château d'Hérouville in the south of France, made famous by Elton John who dubbed it the 'Honky Château' and borrowed the name for a 1972 album. Ronson's first solo effort reached the top 10.

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13th March	Academy Of Contemporary Music - Guildford
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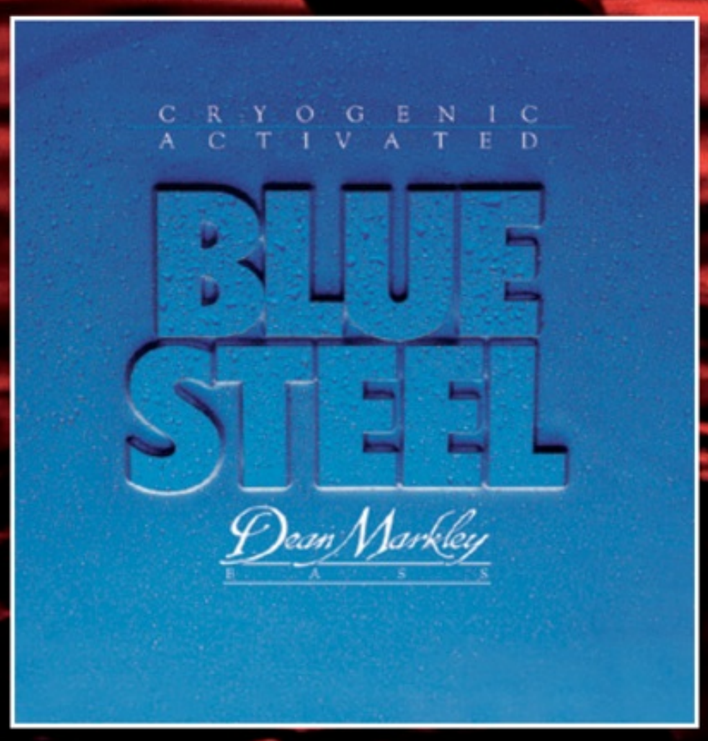

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